

. V I S I T .

ALBUQUERQUE®

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

10-YEAR DESTINATION MASTER PLAN



MASTER PLAN | 2024-2034



HELLO

Dear Tourism Industry Stakeholders and Community Leaders,

As the Board of Directors and staff leadership of Visit Albuquerque, we are thrilled to present our 10-year Destination Master Plan (DMP). This comprehensive roadmap represents a collective vision for Albuquerque's future as a premier destination, built on extensive research, stakeholder engagement and industry expertise.

Our journey in developing this plan has been one of collaboration and dedication. We've engaged with over 2,300 participants, including our committed Steering Committee, to ensure that this plan reflects the diverse perspectives and aspirations of our community. The result is a strategy that not only aims to enhance our visitor economy but also to improve the quality of life for our residents.

The DMP outlines eight key priorities that will guide our efforts over the next decade: Destination Development, Events & Festivals, Downtown Development & Activation, Infrastructure & Transportation, Workforce Development, Venues & Facilities, Funding and Measurements & Metrics. Each priority is supported by actionable strategies and implementation tactics, positioning Visit Albuquerque as a steward of both this plan and our tourism destination.

We're particularly excited about the potential for developing new tourism products and experiences, including the exploration of new catalytic infrastructure developments. These initiatives, among others, have the power to transform Albuquerque's tourism landscape and drive significant economic impact.

As we move forward, we remain steadfast in our commitment to our community values and a visitor-centric approach. We recognize that the success of this plan relies on continued collaboration with our partners, stakeholders and the broader community. Together, we can elevate Albuquerque as a sought-after destination that offers exceptional experiences for visitors while enhancing the quality of life for our residents.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed to this plan. Your insights, dedication and shared vision have been instrumental in shaping this roadmap for Albuquerque's future. We invite you to join us as we embark on this exciting journey to realize the full potential of our beautiful city.

With sincere appreciation and enthusiasm for the future,



Michael Canfield,
Board Chair and President
& CEO of Indian Pueblo
Cultural Center



Ben Abruzzo,
Board Chair-elect,
President of Sandia Peak
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INTRODUCTION

Albuquerque, New Mexico, is rich in cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes and a vibrant blend of traditions. In terms of competing against other destinations for travelers, however, the city still has room to further develop its tourism assets and enhance its overall visitor experience. The essence of this transformation lies in reimagining our infrastructure that supports travelers, strengthening our hospitality services, and developing new events and attractions that will provide visitors with a unique experience that captures the spirit of the city in its most authentic form.

By focusing on improvements that support local businesses and amplify the city’s distinctive culture and natural beauty, this Destination Master Plan identifies how Albuquerque can offer a more immersive and engaging experience for travelers. Visit Albuquerque is proud to release this plan, which was developed in collaboration with JLL’s Tourism & Destination Advisory Group and with the participation of numerous local stakeholders. The Destination Master Plan represents an opportunity to create a tourism ecosystem that will flourish for years to come.

Like the dawn heralded in the last verse of the traditional song “Las Mañanitas,” Albuquerque is on the cusp of a new beginning, filled with optimism and the promise of growth. Everyone who loves Albuquerque wants to see the city reach its full potential. By bringing together a diverse coalition of stakeholders in the public and private sectors, we will create a cohesive narrative that showcases the city’s unique character and that works for visitors as well as for residents. Our Destination Master Plan outlines how Albuquerque can solidify its place as a top destination in the Southwest – an embodiment of the optimism and hope that each new morning brings.



*Ya viene amaneciendo,
ya la luz el día nos dio,
Levántate de mañana,
Mira que ya almaneció.*

*It is starting to be dawn,
The day has given us light.
Get up in the morning,
Look that it has already dawned.*



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As the official Destination Marketing Organization (DMO) for Albuquerque, New Mexico, Visit Albuquerque’s mission is to positively impact the city’s visitor economy by developing and promoting exceptional visitor experiences that also enhance the quality of life for the community. Recognizing the pivotal role that tourism plays in economic development and improving the quality of life in growing destinations, Visit Albuquerque embarked on the development of a 10-year Destination Master Plan (DMP) in 2023. This plan, guided by extensive stakeholder input, including an active Steering Committee, and multifaceted industry research, reflects the organization’s commitment to elevating Albuquerque as a sought-after destination for visitors and a great place to live for the local community.

The DMP, a purpose-driven roadmap, was developed by JLL’s Global Tourism and Destination Advisory Team over 12 months across four phases: listening, analyzing, strategizing and activating. Throughout the process, comprehensive stakeholder engagement was conducted with over 2,300 participants representing diverse entities, such as Visit Albuquerque staff, City and County staff, elected officials, economic development agencies, arts and culture leaders, sports organizers, venue managers, developers and tourism industry business owners. These stakeholders actively participated in surveys, focus groups, and individual meetings, providing invaluable feedback to enhance the plan’s outcomes. The process was also guided by a Steering Committee consisting of 20+ members representing diverse areas within the tourism industry.

In tandem with stakeholder engagement, the plan’s development was supported by in-depth research and market analysis, including JLL’s Tourism Readiness Index, Demand Driver Scorecard, Event Matrix, Convention Center Optimization, and benchmarking against similar and aspirational destinations. This rigorous approach ensured that the DMP is strategically aligned with industry trends and best practices.

The DMP centers around eight priorities to guide the destination and Visit Albuquerque as an organization through the next decade. The priorities include:

 Destination Development	 Events & Festivals	 Downtown Development & Activation	 Infrastructure & Transportation
 Workforce Development	 Venues & Facilities	 Funding	 Measurements & Metrics

These priorities, supported by research, strategic recommendations and implementation tactics, will be cornerstones of Visit Albuquerque’s mission as the steward of this plan and the destination, representing the destination to the visitor audience and to the industry within its own backyard.

Within and beyond this 10-year DMP, Visit Albuquerque explored the potential for developing new tourism products and experiences, enhancing existing ones, and improving infrastructure to support the growth of tourism in the city. The plan recommends conducting feasibility studies for major venue developments, including a potential multiuse complex and a headquarter hotel to support the Albuquerque Convention Center.

This DMP has ambitious goals that range from the development of new tourism products to creating compelling visitor experiences and directly marketing them to enhance destination vibrancy. The Visit Albuquerque Board of Directors and internal team are steadfast in their commitment to community values and a visitor-centric approach and will maintain their focus on the plan’s recommendations and tactics.

The project team acknowledges and expresses heartfelt gratitude to the Steering Committee and all stakeholders for their invaluable input and dedication throughout the DMP process, as their involvement has been fundamental to its development.

MARKET STUDY OVERVIEW



The DMP uses a four-phased approach: listening, analyzing, strategizing and activating. To ensure a comprehensive approach to this plan, the Albuquerque Destination Master Plan integrates insights from stakeholder engagement and market research to develop a clear vision and strategy. Throughout 12 months of planning process, extensive qualitative and quantitative market research was conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the current state of the tourism industry and identify potential areas for growth. JLL leveraged both proprietary strategic planning tools, extensive stakeholder feedback and Visit Albuquerque research and data to better understand the destination. Many of the insights from these findings have been critical to the foundational recommendations in this plan.

The market research section includes vast research which has been detailed further and organized under the following categories for Albuquerque:

JLL-conducted research components:

1. Stakeholder engagement: This section incorporates feedback from multiple methods outlined here. JLL would like to thank and recognize the high level of interest from the over 2,300 participants in surveys, focus groups, committees and one-on-one interviews.

- **Steering Committee Meetings:** Interactive meetings and discussions held monthly for approximately eight consecutive months with the Visit Albuquerque Board of Directors consisting of 20+ members representing diverse areas within the tourism industry, from public to private stakeholders. All recommended priorities have been discussed and are now supported by the Steering Committee.
- **Focus Group Feedback:** In a small group environment, 12 in-depth discussions with 100 stakeholders were conducted from 12 different sectors, including attractions and events, restaurants, food and beverage and retail, hotels and lodging, sports tourism, short-term rentals, government leadership, culture and business association leaders, economic development, meetings and conventions, outdoor recreation and tours, arts and culture, and venues. Through these discussions, valuable insights were gathered on specific areas of interest and growth potential. In some cases, multiple follow up sessions occurred to gain in-depth insight on key issues.
- **Individual Interviews Feedback:** Over 55 key industry stakeholders were interviewed, offering a deeper understanding of perspectives and addressing any specific questions or concerns.
- **Tourism Stakeholder Survey:** Over 150 participants representing a diverse range of individuals and organizations involved in the tourism sector. The feedback summary highlights perspectives on strengths, weaknesses and growth opportunities.
- **Visitor Profile Study:** 1,562 responses (331 previously visited Albuquerque and 1,231 had never visited Albuquerque) were sourced from trusted panel providers (999 total responses) and a Visit Albuquerque email list (563 total responses) in a survey conducted by JLL’s partner, Future Partners, from April to May 2024.
- **Resident Sentiment Study:** Over 520 participants representing Albuquerque’s residents in a survey conducted by JLL’s partner, Future Partners, from April to May 2024.
- **Site Visits:** JLL team visited 50+ points of interest throughout Albuquerque across four visits, providing valuable insights and observations.

2. Tourism Readiness Index: Detailed data analysis process that used nearly 1,000 data points across Albuquerque and 13 comparable destinations to assess the readiness and capacity of the tourism industry in Albuquerque. The typology outcome placed Albuquerque in the “Emerging Performers” category, a destination with growing momentum potential, and opportunities for further strategic development and enhancing the tourism infrastructure.

3. Demand Driver Scorecard: Evaluation that identified 40 key destination assets and experiences driving visitor demand in the region.

4. Event Matrix: Evaluation that identified 22 key events driving visitor demand in the region.



- 5. Entertainment Venues Landscape:** 15 comparable venues with 10,000+ seats and 11 venues with between 5,000-10,000 seats were analyzed.
- 6. Youth Sports Venue Landscape:** 50+ youth sports venues were analyzed within 120 miles of Albuquerque.
- 7. Conventions and Meetings Landscape:** 12 convention centers from the competitive set defined in collaboration with Visit Albuquerque were analyzed in total exhibit space, ballroom space and convention hotel rooms.
- 8. Leisure Tourism and Lodging Package Benchmarking:** 10 competitive cities were analyzed for leisure tourism, and 10 competitive cities were analyzed for lodging and hotels data.

A comprehensive research approach allowed for the development of a clear vision and strategy for the Albuquerque tourism industry, with foundational recommendations that are rooted in data, insights and feedback from highly interested and engaged stakeholders.

Overview of Albuquerque as a Destination

Albuquerque, the largest city in New Mexico, stands out as a vibrant and dynamic region that attracts millions of visitors annually. With a diverse range of attractions, cultural experiences and natural beauty, Albuquerque has established itself as a premier destination for travelers from around the world. The city is nestled in the high desert of New Mexico, with the Sandia Mountains to the east and the Rio Grande flowing through its heart. Albuquerque is known for its rich Native American and Hispanic heritage, as well as its modern amenities and thriving arts scene.

Albuquerque offers a diverse and compelling experience for a wide range of visitors and potential residents, renowned for its clear, sunny skies and iconic Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta. The city caters to varied interests and budgets, from exploring historic Old Town and riding the Sandia Peak Tramway to visiting the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center. Its impressive natural landscape, including the Petroglyph National Monument and the bosque along the Rio Grande, provides ample opportunities for outdoor recreation. Leisure travelers are drawn to Albuquerque's vibrant culture, rich heritage and unique events, while meeting planners appreciate its blend of authentic experiences and top-notch facilities. Sporting event organizers benefit from the city's planning expertise and variety of venues. For New Mexicans outside Albuquerque, the city offers an unparalleled mix of shopping, dining and entertainment not found elsewhere in the state. Remote workers and potential residents are attracted to Albuquerque's affordability, mild climate, growing tech sector, cultural diversity and healthy lifestyle options, making it an ideal mid-sized city for both career and personal growth.

In 2022, Albuquerque's tourism industry showed strong signs of recovery from the pandemic, with hotel occupancy rates reaching 66.3%, a significant increase from the previous year. The city welcomed approximately 6.2 million visitors, contributing to a total economic impact of \$2.1 billion. This upward trend reflects robust growth post-pandemic, highlighting the city's attractiveness and resilience as a travel destination (Visit Albuquerque Annual Report, 2022).

In developing this Destination Master Plan in collaboration with the City, industry partners and community leaders, Visit Albuquerque is undertaking a comprehensive approach to enhance the city's competitiveness and appeal as a destination. This long-term strategy, last updated in 2006, aims to improve the city's tourism offerings while ensuring benefits are shared among internal and external stakeholders. Simultaneously, Visit Albuquerque nurtures relationships with the local business community through its Partner Development and Community Engagement efforts. Over 600 local hospitality businesses have become Partners, collectively investing about \$950,000 annually in cash and in-kind services to support marketing initiatives. This dual approach of strategic planning and community engagement demonstrates Visit Albuquerque's commitment to enhancing both the visitor experience and residents' quality of life, while positioning the city as a premier destination for tourism, meetings and sports events.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder input was collected through multiple methods (outlined below in detail), including a series of topical focus groups, a comprehensive tourism survey, site visits, and individual meetings with tourism stakeholders, industry leaders and related entities.

Steering Committee

The Steering Committee meetings were monthly gatherings composed of Visit Albuquerque's Board of Directors, representing a diverse range of industry leaders within culture and heritage, economic development, lodging, meeting and events, restaurants, retail and entertainment, workforce, and more. Meetings were held monthly for approximately 10 consecutive months. The committee consisted of 20+ members, of which a full list can be found in the [Appendix](#).

Tourism Stakeholder Survey

Questions from the survey capture a variety of topics including travel preferences, satisfaction levels with accommodations, transportation, attractions, etc., suggestions for improvement and more. The tourism survey garnered 150 survey responses from across Albuquerque. The survey was conducted to gather diverse perspectives from various sectors across the county.

Focus Groups

Focus groups were conducted to discuss key themes and gather quantitative data. We conducted 12 focus groups with 100 total participants, including attractions and events, restaurants, F&B and retail, hotels and lodging, sports tourism, short-term rentals, government leadership, cultural and business association leaders, economic development, meetings and conventions, outdoor recreation and tours, arts and culture, and venues.

Individual Interviews

Individual meetings were held with stakeholders to collect detailed feedback. The stakeholders included industry leadership and management, supporters, and individuals concerned with tourism's potential challenges and impacts on Albuquerque. The interview process encompassed 60+ individual interviews, including all members of the Steering Committee.



Site Visits

Multiple visits were conducted to Albuquerque to immerse further in the local environment, engage directly with stakeholders, visit tourism sites and attractions, and witness firsthand the dynamics of the tourism industry in Albuquerque. Over 50 points of interest were visited throughout Albuquerque by JLL across four visits.

Visit Albuquerque Resident Sentiment Study

The Resident Sentiment Study provided a better understanding of the needs, perceptions and opinions of tourism as well as the community. The goals of the research included:

- A deeper understanding of detailed resident profiles.
- An evaluation of key metrics (e.g., likelihood to recommend, etc.) for Albuquerque and Visit Albuquerque.
- An assessment of resident sentiment towards tourism and Visit Albuquerque.
- The identification of strategies for resident engagement, support, tourism growth, etc.

The key findings and insights from the research included:

Albuquerque residents have a long tenure in the destination.

- Most respondents have been in Albuquerque for more than 20 years (62%).
- Among those newer to Albuquerque (i.e., residents for two years or less), natural landscape (49%) and cost of living (44%) were the most common reasons for moving to the area.

Only 37% of survey respondents are likely to recommend Albuquerque as a place to visit, and even fewer are likely to recommend it as a place to live (26%).

- Respondents believe that climate/weather (85%), unique culture (76%), and outdoor activities (68%) are the best aspects and attributes regarding the Albuquerque community. At the same time, a much smaller percentage have positive sentiment around safety (12%) or education (12%). It is important to understand the areas in which Visit Albuquerque can have an impact, such as highlighting the positives of the destination not only to visitors but also residents.

The majority of survey respondents believe that the benefits of tourism outweigh any problems caused by it.

- Most respondents agree that tourism is important for jobs (74%), restaurants, attractions and events (83%), and that the revenues from tourism are important to funding government services (60%). It is important to continue to promote the benefits of tourism to individual residents and the community.
- However, residents who responded to the survey do not understand that the tax revenue from tourists reduces residents’ tax obligations (44%) or that without tourism Albuquerque could not sustain itself (48%). There is an opportunity to educate residents and help them understand how tourism benefits them directly using detailed examples. Survey respondents do not understand specifically where the revenue from tourism is being used.

Only half of residents who responded to the survey are familiar with Visit Albuquerque (51%), and among that only half (48%) believe they are knowledgeable about the organization.

- Half of respondents (51%) have a neutral opinion of the organization’s efforts to balance driving tourism with the needs of residents, and 46% feel that their voice is heard by Visit Albuquerque. There is an opportunity to leverage existing assets and information to educate residents on the mission of Visit Albuquerque. It is important to provide content to residents in channels that they use, chiefly social media.



Visit Albuquerque Visitor Profile Study

The Visitor Profile Study provided a comprehensive understanding of those who previously visited Albuquerque and those who had never visited the destination. The goals of the research included:

- The identification of what motivates visitors to travel to Albuquerque.
- An understanding of Albuquerque’s perception among past and potential visitors.
- An understanding of the behavior and needs of past and potential visitors.
- An assessment of visitor satisfaction and likelihood to revisit and/or recommend Albuquerque.
- The identification of specific trip details, such as origin, purpose of visit, mode of transportation and accommodations.

The key findings and insights from the research included:

Surveyed travelers plan to take seven trips in the next two years.

- Almost half of survey respondents (48%) are likely to visit Albuquerque in the next two years, representing a great opportunity for the destination.
- One-fifth of respondents (21%) visited Albuquerque for leisure in the past year. Most who visited Albuquerque did so more than once, with the average being 2.8 overnight trips. Those who have previously visited Albuquerque represent a unique opportunity, as most visitors are very likely to return to the destination.
- Albuquerque has the destination attributes and activities that travelers desire.
- Travelers say scenic beauty (80%), nature (68%), unique activities (65%), unique cuisine (64%), and cultural tourism/museums (61%) are important when selecting destinations to visit. Travelers stated that Albuquerque performs well on all these important attributes and activities, which should be promoted and marketed.

On average, travel parties spent \$684 per day while in Albuquerque.

- Travel parties averaged 2.8 people, and visitors stayed almost 3.6 days in Albuquerque. There is an opportunity to get visitors to extend their stays in the destination.
- The most common reason for visiting Albuquerque was vacation (30%), visiting friends/relatives (23%), or attending an event/festival (20%). Over half of visitors stayed in a hotel/motel (53%).
- Additionally, visitors began planning their trip to Albuquerque around two months before taking it. There is an opportunity to market additional activities, attractions and dining options prior to visitors’ arrival in Albuquerque.

Visitors were satisfied with their trip to Albuquerque, from the overall experience to the dining options.

- Visitors were most satisfied with the Nob Hill (94%) and Old Town (94%) areas of Albuquerque.
- Visitors are very likely to recommend Albuquerque to friends/family (71%), as well as return to the destination (80%) themselves. Those who have previously visited Albuquerque can serve as great ambassadors to promote Albuquerque and all that the destination has to offer visitors.

The diverse set of perspectives ensured our study comprehensively captured both the benefits and potential drawbacks of tourism. All stakeholder feedback also provided key guidance and direction to become the basis of many recommendations, supported by real-life examples from site visits.

Key Themes from Stakeholder Engagement

The various methods of stakeholder feedback reflected several major themes within Albuquerque:

- There is potential for continued development and promotion of cultural tourism, particularly around Indigenous experiences and Hispanic heritage.
- Outdoor recreation assets are underutilized and present an opportunity for growth in tourism offerings.
- The events landscape, particularly during shoulder seasons, needs diversification and enhancement to drive year-round visitation.
- There's a need for new and upgraded visitor-facing venues and facilities, including a potential multiuse complex and a headquarter hotel in close proximity to the Convention Center for ease of access to the Center by meeting and convention attendees.
- Leveraging Albuquerque's unique attributes, such as its culinary scene and Route 66 heritage, can help differentiate the destination and attract more visitors.
- Strengthening partnerships between Visit Albuquerque, City departments and agencies, and industry stakeholders is essential for implementing tourism initiatives.
- Downtown revitalization, including addressing issues of vacant properties and improving overall vibrancy, is crucial for tourism growth.
- Improving the permitting and licensing processes for tourism-related businesses could stimulate growth in the sector.
- There's a need for improved connectivity between neighborhoods and enhanced public transportation options, especially for visitors.
- Workforce development and retention in the hospitality industry is a significant challenge that needs addressing.
- Developing a comprehensive hospitality education program for youth could help address workforce challenges in the long term.
- Safety and security concerns, particularly in Downtown areas, are a priority for both residents and visitors.
- Enhancing Albuquerque's brand awareness and perception in target markets is crucial for attracting more visitors.
- Increasing advocacy efforts for tourism-related initiatives and funding at both city and state levels is necessary for industry growth.
- Improving data collection and sharing among stakeholders could lead to more informed decision-making in the tourism sector.

The key themes identified above present a brief synopsis of the stakeholder conversations, focus group feedback, survey results and individual interviews. The themes, in conjunction with data and market analysis outcomes, supported the development of the priorities in this plan. The DMP process leveraged extensive stakeholder feedback to validate research and direction for the future of the destination.

Tourism Readiness Index

Overview

The first phase of the market study involved an in-depth analysis of Albuquerque as a destination based on the Tourism Readiness Index. The Tourism Readiness Index is an analysis tool developed collaboratively by JLL and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). The Index offers destinations an opportunity to evaluate and comprehend their own tourism preparedness based on 75 essential data points that directly influence the tourism industry. The indicators evaluate the current state of Albuquerque's tourism industry and identify potential areas for future growth.

The assessment encompasses research of various aspects within a destination's landscape, including traditional hotel performance metrics, infrastructure and capacity building, environmental sustainability requirements, and more. With the insights provided by the Tourism Readiness Index, destinations can gain a thorough understanding of growth readiness, enabling informed decisions and optimization of tourism strategies.

A comprehensive analysis was conducted on Albuquerque and 13 comparable and aspirational destinations, examining a total of 75 indicators. The process resulted in the collection and organization of nearly 1,000 data points. All sources included were vetted by JLL and WTTC.

The Tourism Readiness Index analyzed data for each region in the following categories:

- Scale
- Concentration
- Leisure
- Business
- Urban Readiness
- Safety and Security
- Environmental Readiness
- Policy

These eight categories each incorporate up to 15 data points that are grouped to create the pillars of tourism readiness. The data points in each pillar are weighted and scored. The outcomes from this analysis determine what features of the destination need to be prioritized to ensure long-term smart growth to positively impact the local economy through tourism's benefits. See [Appendix](#) for further detail on the Tourism Readiness Index methodology.



Results

The Tourism Readiness Index assessed Albuquerque across 13 comparable cities and 75 data points. The index reveals that Albuquerque performs best in the environmental and urban readiness pillars. Notably, Albuquerque ranks just at the competitive set average in the environmental and urban readiness pillars. Albuquerque falls significantly behind in the business, leisure and scale pillars and slightly behind in the safety and security and concentration pillars.

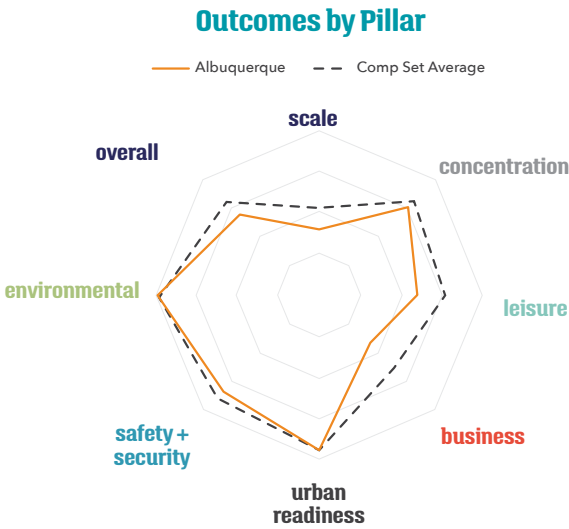
In-depth analysis of data from reputable global databases such as Centre for Aviation, CoStar, Oxford Economics, Tripadvisor and more shed light on the factors contributing to Albuquerque’s readiness performance. For instance, the analyzed data highlights the positive impact of factors like affordability, low congestion, air quality and renewable energy sources.

Conversely, certain data points contribute to the underperformance in areas such as a small drive market, few leisure activities, a small daytime worker population and limited hotel meeting space. These insights provide opportunities for targeted improvements to enhance Albuquerque's overall tourism readiness and maintain its competitive edge.

Based on the results, Albuquerque is classified as an "Emerging Performer." This typology represents a destination with growing momentum, rising infrastructure and opportunities for strategic development. The classification highlights the opportunity for Albuquerque to grow its tourism industry by focusing on infrastructure and product enhancements.

As an Emerging Performer, Albuquerque should prioritize growth opportunities by developing leisure attractions and growing tourism infrastructure. By continuously improving the overall experience for visitors through investments in infrastructure, venues, events, attractions and services, Albuquerque can position itself as an established destination.

Ongoing strategic planning, including market research and targeting new visitor segments, will enable Albuquerque to maximize the utilization of its existing assets while identifying new growth opportunities.



Demand Driver Scorecard

Overview

The regional strategic planning process utilized JLL's proprietary Demand Driver Scorecard to evaluate the impact of individual regional assets and experiences and future investment opportunities. The Demand Driver Scorecard is designed to establish a baseline and identify investment prospects within the tourism sector. Strategic planners, investors and developers gain the ability to make informed decisions backed by robust data and analysis. The Scorecard assists destinations in strategic planning and guides stakeholders in the formulation of targeted marketing to maximize returns.

This scoring process was based on an evaluation which includes:

- **Multistep Assessment:** Evaluating and assigning points to each attraction or experience against eight key criteria, including current visitor demand levels, event opportunities, engaging visitor experience and more (further detail outlined in [Appendix](#)).
- **Categorization as Attractions vs. Attractors/Demand Generators:** Categorizing assets as attractions or attractors based on a scoring system of 0-100.
- **Scoring:** Classifying each attraction into a category based on overall points score. Categories were: Little to no visitor interest (0-20), Interesting to do on a repeat visit (20-40), "Must see" if in the area (40-60), Regional attractors (60-80), National attractors (80-95), and Global attractors (95-100). Scoring above 60 indicates assets or experiences as an attractor.
- **Categorization of each Demand Driver:** Segmenting assets into 13 unique market categories based on specific criteria and characteristics, including family-friendly attractions, museums, entertainment, educational attractions, outdoor recreation and more. Assets could be assigned to multiple relevant categories.

Categorization of a region’s demand drivers helps assess the visitor experience, assists in strategic planning, identifies areas for future development or revitalization projects and enables the prioritization of enhancements to visitor-facing attractions. Overall, asset categorization provides a framework for a more organized and detailed analysis, aiding in market research, planning and decision-making processes.

Results

The Albuquerque Demand Driver Scorecard process assessed 40 attractions and experiences across the city, which were identified by Visit Albuquerque’s internal team, desktop research and by JLL during site visits.

The results reveal that 60% of the scored assets are generating global, national or regional demand. Five attractions and experiences are identified as national or international demand drivers, including the Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Route 66 and hot air balloon flights. Additionally, about 45% of assets and experiences drive regional demand to Albuquerque, with examples like New Mexican cuisine, flamenco, the National Hispanic Cultural Center, Albuquerque Old Town, Electric Playhouse and Petroglyph National Monument.

According to the analysis, 90% of assets scored in the region are considered family-friendly, with 68% of these assets driving global, national and regional demand. Notable examples of family-friendly attractions include Big Jim Farms, art markets and Explora Museum, among others. The abundance of family-friendly attractions in the region highlights the importance of catering to the needs and preferences of family travelers.

Furthermore, approximately 23% of the assets scored are classified as outdoor recreation, of which 78% are considered attractors for the region. The outdoor recreational areas encompass popular destinations such as the bosque, the ABQ BioPark Botanic Garden, golf and hiking, among others. It is essential to underscore the significance of preserving and maintaining the natural assets within the region. Natural resources, such as parks and mountains, not only enhance the quality of life for residents but also play a vital role in attracting visitors and driving tourism.

As the third and final example, 41% of the analyzed assets are related to culture, heritage and history, of which 75% are classified as attractors. These assets include Albuquerque Old Town and the Anderson Abruzzo International Balloon Museum, among others.

Driven by the insights obtained from the Demand Driver Scorecard, it is evident that outdoor recreation assets and cultural, heritage and historical assets play a vital role as key drivers of visitor demand in Albuquerque. Recognizing the significance of these assets, Albuquerque can strategically leverage and showcase its unique outdoor experiences and rich cultural fabric to attract additional visitors. Focusing on targeted cultural heritage tourism will not only attract visitors with a specific interest in local culture, but also appeal to a broader audience seeking unique and immersive travel experiences. This strategic approach can contribute to the overall growth and sustainability of the tourism industry in Albuquerque and will further be explored as a priority in the recommendations section.



Event Matrix

Overview

The Event Matrix process encompassed a thorough evaluation of existing annual leisure-facing events within each region. The assessment helps tourism stakeholders understand which events generated the most impact and, more specifically, which aspects of event planning could further enhance the event. Similar to the Demand Driver Scorecard, JLL’s Event Matrix product involves a dedicated analysis of individual events, charting their outcomes and impacts based on overall scores.

The iterative approach enables continual refinement and optimization as events are held each year. It empowers regions, DMOs and event organizers to stay ahead of market trends and make strategic adjustments to optimize event offerings, ensuring events remain competitive in the ever-changing landscape of the industry.

The Event Matrix process included:

- **Identifying Significant Events:** Collaborating with DMO to inventory regionwide event master list.
- **Utilizing Comprehensive Criteria:** Scoring each event based on 11 detailed criteria aligned with the broader tourism landscape, such as event infrastructure, planning, marketing and potential economic impact.
- **Categorizing Events Based on Score:** Categorizing assets as attractions or attractors based on a scoring system of 0-100.
- **Scoring:** Classifying each attraction into a category based on overall points score. Categories were Community based events (0-60), regional events (60-80), national events (80-95), and global events (95-100). Scoring above 60 indicates assets or experiences as an attractor.
- **Evaluating Critical Mass:** Assessing the overall volume and significance of current events, identifying need periods, gaps and opportunities.
- **Leveraging Outcomes:** Developing optimal calendar programming and identifying specific opportunities to enhance events.
- **Collaboration:** Working closely with the Regional Advisory Committee to review effective tactics, addressing study results and engaging individual event organizers in the future.

This approach ensures a well-informed understanding of the event landscape and helps in positioning regions for success by focusing on high-impact events. See [Appendix](#) for further detail on the Event Matrix methodology.



Results

The Event Matrix process inventoried and scored 22 events across Albuquerque that were collaboratively identified by the Visit Albuquerque team during JLL’s visits to the region. Similar to its demand drivers, Albuquerque hosts an array of annual events, with a diversity of events across the region and throughout the year.

The outcomes from this analysis identified 11 unique events that are positioned to drive global, national and regional demand to Albuquerque, including the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta, Gathering of Nations Pow Wow, National Fiery Foods & Barbecue show and others. The high-impact events drive extensive leisure tourism, reinforce the positive nature of the Albuquerque brand and enhance the destination’s visibility.

We analyzed several additional events, such as the Harvest Wine Festival, Lowrider Super Show and the Lavender in the Village Festival. While these events attract some visitors, overall scores indicate these events are primarily local in nature, contribute relatively less overnight visitation and economic impact as compared to other annual events in the region.

The results of the Event Matrix indicate stakeholder focus should be placed on regional annual events as well as additional signature events that have a greater potential for driving overnight visitation and substantial economic impact. Further, it is recommended that the Event Matrix be utilized on an ongoing basis as an objective approach to evaluate the event inventory at any given time to assess the impacts of current events in the region.

Additionally, it is highly recommended to supplement the utilization of the Event Matrix with external resources to support events with regional impact. Collaborating with local event organizers, economic development organizations and industry experts can provide valuable insights, data and expertise to further evaluate the potential economic benefits and overnight visitation drivers of current and future regional annual events. This collaborative approach, in conjunction with the Event Matrix, ensures a comprehensive and well-informed decision-making process when assessing the overall impact of current events in the region. Further details and recommendations on events are outlined in the Events and Festivals section of this plan.



Conventions and Meetings Landscape

JLL also studied 12 convention centers within Albuquerque’s competitive set, including an analysis of exhibit space, ballroom space and number of hotel rooms within walking distance.

JLL’s analysis determined that New Orleans boasts the largest exhibit space among the competitive set, while Albuquerque ranks last out of the 12 convention centers analyzed in terms of total exhibit and ballroom space. The average total exhibit space in the competitive market is 826,334 square feet. Notably, Albuquerque’s exhibit space falls significantly short of this benchmark, with 87% less space than the market average.

Albuquerque offers 784 hotel rooms within a quarter-mile radius of its convention center, all of which are full-service accommodations. This 100% full-service room inventory surpasses the competitive average of 95%. However, it’s important to note that not all of these rooms are typically available for convention blocks. Consequently, a single convention at peak attendance cannot be accommodated in one hotel, underscoring the need for an additional headquarter hotel to support larger events.

Expanding to a one-mile radius, Albuquerque’s room count increases to 1,294, yet Albuquerque’s ranking drops to 12th among its competitors in this broader area. In comparison, Las Vegas leads the pack with the highest number of full-service hotels, while San Antonio tops the list for limited-service hotel rooms within the quarter-mile proximity. This data highlights Albuquerque’s unique position in providing exclusively full-service options immediately near its convention center, potentially appealing to certain market segments, while also indicating room for growth in overall accommodation capacity within the broader one-mile area.

Convention Center Optimization-in Progress

The Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) optimization process is underway and will include a comprehensive analysis of square footage utilization data from 2017-2023 (excluding 2020), including ACC calendar usage by room and event type, as well as space utilization patterns. The process also will examine Visit Albuquerque leads that turned definite at the ACC, analyzing them by priority level, market segment and geography. Additionally, lost business data will be analyzed by year, market segment and priority level. This thorough analysis aims to establish a foundation for utilization and average annual production, ultimately leading to the development of a multi-year strategy to achieve sales and booking goals. The process also focuses on creating booking guidelines, key performance indicators (KPIs), and identifying sales and prospecting implications to optimize the ACC’s performance and economic impact on the region.

The process aims to create a strategic framework for optimizing the ACC’s performance, focusing on increasing high-priority events (P1 and P2) while maintaining a stable base of smaller events (P3 and P4). This approach has been tried and true in many destinations, and was designed by JLL to gradually ramp up bookings over a five-year period. The outcomes will also emphasize the importance of creating partnerships and alignment with other industry leaders to reach the established targets, recognizing the need for a collaborative effort in achieving the ACC’s optimization goals.

Youth Sports Venues Landscape

JLL analyzed over 50 youth sports venues located within 120 miles – a two-hour drive – of Albuquerque, inventorying the number of indoor/outdoor courts and fields.

JLL's analysis revealed approximately 150 youth sports courts distributed across 54 venues within a 120-mile radius. Notably, Albuquerque houses 64% of these courts, indicating its strong competitive position in indoor and outdoor youth sports court inventory.

The study also identified about 230 youth sports fields within the same radius. In contrast to its court dominance, Albuquerque accounts for only 38% of the total fields, suggesting potential for expansion in youth sports field facilities. The city faces competition from several large complexes outside its limits, which offer multiple fields in single locations.

Entertainment Venues Landscape

JLL analyzed 15 comparable event venues with 10,000+ seats and 11 venues between 5,000 and 10,000 seats to determine Albuquerque's competitiveness in this market.

Of the 15 comparable event venues over 10,000 seats, Moody Center in Austin, Texas, with a capacity of 15,000, led in gross sales among venues in the 10,000 to 20,000 capacity range during the three-year analysis period. Oak Mountain Theatre in Birmingham, Alabama, demonstrated the highest efficiency, boasting the top usage rate when comparing average capacity per event to total capacity. Despite having the largest seating capacity, KFC Yum! Center in Louisville, Kentucky, ranked only 8th out of 15 centers analyzed in terms of gross sales.

Of the 11 venues analyzed between 5,000 and 10,000 seats, Santander Arena, located in Reading, Pennsylvania, with a capacity of 8,900 seats emerged as the top performer in gross sales among venues. Concurrently, Cable Dahmer Arena in Independence, Missouri, with a 5,800-seat capacity exhibited superior operational efficiency, achieving the highest usage rate based on the ratio of average event capacity to total capacity.

This analysis of 26 event venues across two capacity ranges (10,000+ and 5,000-10,000 seats) reveals that venue size does not necessarily dictate financial success. KFC Yum! Center serves as a prime example of this principle. Despite having the largest seating capacity among the analyzed venues, it only managed to rank 8th out of 15 in gross sales. Factors such as market demand, event programming, operational efficiency and strategic pricing play crucial roles in a venue's performance. The data suggests that mid-sized venues can be highly competitive, with some outperforming larger counterparts in terms of gross sales and usage rates. For Albuquerque, this insight is particularly relevant as it considers its position in the event venue market. The city could leverage its unique attributes and optimize its venue operations to compete effectively, even against larger markets, by focusing on efficiency, strategic event selection and maximizing audience engagement rather than solely relying on venue size.

Key Themes from the Research Process

- JLL's Tourism Readiness Index revealed that Albuquerque performs well in two out of eight pillars: environmental and urban readiness, but falls behind in business, leisure and scale pillars. This indicates areas of strength to leverage and specific areas for improvement.
- JLL's Tourism Readiness Index classified Albuquerque as an "Emerging Performer," which means the city has growing momentum and opportunities for strategic development. To capitalize on this, the city should focus on developing leisure attractions, growing tourism infrastructure and enhancing visitor experiences to position itself as an established destination.
- The Demand Driver Scorecard highlighted the opportunity for growth in assets such as culture, heritage and history, agritourism, craft beverages and wellness.
- The Demand Driver Scorecard results highlighted the significant inventory of family-friendly assets in Albuquerque, making up 87% of the total assets, and 68% of the total attractions.
- The Event Matrix analysis identified 11 unique events in Albuquerque that are positioned to drive national and regional demand, attracting visitors consistently throughout the year.
- The Event Matrix analysis determined that only 30% of total events are held during the shoulder seasons between November to March.



PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The Albuquerque Destination Master Plan outlines several key priorities and recommendations to enhance the city’s tourism industry over the next decade. These strategic focus areas have been developed through extensive research, stakeholder engagement, and analysis of Albuquerque’s unique strengths and opportunities.

The priorities address critical aspects of destination development, including product enhancement, event programming, Downtown revitalization, infrastructure improvements, workforce development, venue upgrades and organizational positioning. Each priority area is accompanied by specific recommendations, strategies and best practices, when necessary, designed to leverage Albuquerque’s assets, address challenges and position the city as a premier destination for visitors. The following sections will delve into these priorities and recommendations in detail, providing a roadmap for Visit Albuquerque and its partners to implement over the coming years.

To clarify Visit Albuquerque’s role in implementing the Destination Master Plan, this process has assigned specific roles to the organization for various strategies and initiatives. These roles are defined as follows:



Lead: Take primary responsibility for initiating, organizing, and directing tourism development efforts and strategies.



Support: Provide assistance and resources for initiatives and partners without taking a primary leadership role.



Advocate: Speak in favor of and actively promote tourism-related interests to decision-makers and relevant authorities.

Destination Development

Product Development

Situational Analysis

The market for leisure visitors is highly competitive in the global tourism industry. Destination marketing and management organizations invest significant time and resources to promote their locations as ideal destinations for short breaks, getaways or longer vacations. To successfully attract independent leisure travelers, destinations must offer an overall experience that surpasses expectations, ensuring that potential visitors are enticed by the destination itself rather than being solely motivated by specific events or attractions. This challenge is particularly pronounced in a city like Albuquerque, where the bar is set high for captivating leisure travelers.

Based on Albuquerque’s visitor survey data from 300 past visitors and 1,200 potential visitors processed by Future Partners, the average stay for past visitors in Albuquerque was around three nights and 3.5 days in 2023. The survey also demonstrates that historically, the most day and overnight leisure trips have occurred in October surrounding the Ballon Fiesta event. Most who visited Albuquerque did so more than once in 2023, with the average being around two trips. Those who have previously visited Albuquerque represent a unique opportunity, as every 8 in 10 visitors are likely to return to the destination.

As mentioned in the [Market Study](#) section of this plan, JLL’s Demand Driver Scorecard was used to analyze 40 individual assets and experiences as sample representatives of all assets in Albuquerque in detail. It identified that 60% of assets that were studied are positioned to drive national and regional demand to Albuquerque, with five assets, including Hot Air Balloon Flights and Experiences, Sandia Peak Aerial Tramway, Indian Pueblo Cultural Center, Route 66, and Film Locations specifically driving national demand. While Albuquerque is well known for its ballooning scene, it also offers stunning natural resources, unique culinary experiences, and arts and cultural activities.

A key finding from the stakeholder engagement and Demand Driver Analysis of the 40 analyzed attractions is that that arts and outdoor recreation assets each comprise approximately 20% of the assets in Albuquerque, with three out of four assets in these categories currently attracting visitors to the city on a regional and national basis. This highlights the need for further product development and diversification, particularly in the outdoor recreation and arts sectors, to create additional volume of attractions. Without such diversification and development, Albuquerque will continue to offer the same experience, which, although beloved by visitors, is not a sustainable strategy for increasing the demand in Albuquerque as a destination. The criteria in the Scorecard, included in the [Appendix](#) of this report, is something that Visit Albuquerque can continuously use to demonstrate to partners how an asset could or should be positioned to drive the desired impact from visitor markets.

In terms of activities, local dining was ranked as the most popular activity among visitors, followed by sightseeing, shopping and scenic drives, in the Visitor Survey. Regarding cultural tourism and museums, 77% of the respondents rated their experience as excellent or very good, followed closely by 74% expressing satisfaction with the locally unique cuisine. Old Town, with its charming architecture and cultural significance, emerges as the most common attraction for visitors. The visitor survey indicated that 78% of those who visit Old Town have a good experience, yet only 58% of total visitors visited Old Town in their trip, highlighting its potential for further growth. These findings highlight the significance of promoting and marketing these aspects of Albuquerque to further enhance its appeal to travelers seeking enriching cultural and culinary experiences.

Albuquerque’s culinary experiences have emerged as a key focus for product elevation and messaging, especially in Visit Albuquerque’s 2025 marketing plan. This emphasis is supported by stakeholder feedback and visitor survey results, with “local dining” topping the list as the primary activity for 68% of respondents in Albuquerque. Green chile has repeatedly been mentioned when discussing Albuquerque’s food culture, evident in the seasonal tradition of roasting green chile and its recognition as the state’s official aroma.

Building on the strong foundation established through collaborations with the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC), there is a unique opportunity to focus on Indigenous experiences. With the global rise in demand for Indigenous experiences, and the sector expected to reach \$65 billion USD, with a 4% CAGR, up from \$30 billion in 2022, as well as the State of New Mexico’s focus on Indigenous tourism, Albuquerque is well-positioned to cater to this growing market and make long-term investments in Indigenous tourism. The engagement process indicated that many of the 23 Native American Pueblos and Tribes are likely to be interested in developing tourism-related experiences. However, extensive collaboration and engagement need to occur with IPCC and individual Pueblos to surface their priorities and potential interest in tourism development. This process should be highly collaborative with the local Pueblos and typically takes between 5-10 years to gauge the interest of each Pueblo in creating Indigenous-led experiences. These experiences should authentically represent Native American cultures and aim to drive demand from a broader audience.

Similarly, Albuquerque’s Hispanic culture and presence are vibrant and integral components of the city’s identity. The Hispanic community, with its deep historical roots, contributes to the rich heritage and cultural tapestry of the region. The city’s adobe buildings, picturesque plazas and unique culinary traditions, blending the flavors of New Mexican, Spanish and Mexican cuisines, create an unmistakable Southwestern charm that is deeply intertwined with the Hispanic roots.



Albuquerque is also home to a thriving flamenco scene, attracting national and international attention as an art form deeply connected to Spanish culture. The city’s National Hispanic Cultural Center serves as a focal point for promoting and preserving Hispanic heritage through exhibitions, performances, educational initiatives, and community gatherings. The expansion and increased visibility of Albuquerque’s Hispanic cultural offerings present valuable opportunities for tourism development and create a captivating destination that invites visitors to immerse themselves in the rich cultural tapestry that defines the city’s Hispanic identity.

As for outdoor recreation, Albuquerque has an ideal location as the gateway to New Mexico’s outdoor adventures in different seasons. Albuquerque’s ideal location provides easy access to a wide range of activities, such as golfing on scenic courses, hitting the slopes for skiing or snowboarding in the nearby mountains, and exploring the extensive network of trails for mountain biking, making the city a haven for outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds. It is worth noting that Visit Albuquerque has already made significant strides since the last master planning process. Their focus on promoting outdoor adventures has resulted in notable progress with room for further solidifying Albuquerque’s reputation as a premier destination for outdoor activities.

While Albuquerque possesses a distinctive brand, there is still work to be done in developing the visitor experience to its fullest potential. To elevate Albuquerque’s tourism products, it is crucial to not only develop new demand generators and experiences, but also to create a favorable environment for private investors to succeed in these endeavors.

Elevating Existing Products and Experiences

Objective: *Elevate existing products such as Indigenous Experiences, Culinary Product and Outdoor Recreation to generate demand and attract niche market segments.*

Indigenous Experiences

Albuquerque’s strong foundation in collaborating with the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center (IPCC) has laid the groundwork for immersive Indigenous experiences that authentically represent the Native American communities of New Mexico. To further enhance and promote these unique cultural offerings, continued collaboration with the IPCC and intentional inclusion of each Pueblo and Tribe is essential. In addition to the numerous cultural events and notions that have been developed, there is significant potential to further enhance and promote these unique cultural offerings, particularly in the realms of Indigenous cultural experiences.



1. Expand Collaboration between the Tourism Industry, the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and Indigenous Tribes and Pueblos in New Mexico

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with IPCC and Indigenous tribes to conduct a feasibility study to assess the business case for a hub and spoke model for tourism experiences created by the New Mexico Native American communities ¹ . Use the findings to identify themes, experiences and locations that align with the interests and capabilities of the Native American communities.	#Co-Lead	◆ Visit Albuquerque ◆ IPCC	◆ Native American Communities
Engage with and position the Native American community members as the leader of creating tourism experiences from the very beginning, ensuring that their voices are integrated into the planning and development process. Take into consideration that a longer timeline needs to be dedicated to the engagement efforts to ensure community interest and buy-in.	#Co-Lead	◆ IPCC ◆ Visit Albuquerque	◆ American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) ◆ Native American Communities
Support providing training and capacity building programs for Native American community members interested in participating in the hub and spoke model. Getting involved with IPCC’s new Entrepreneur Complex can help encourage Native Americans to launch their entrepreneurial and business ideas in the tourism field. This can be followed by offering workshops on visitor engagement, interpretive storytelling, cultural sensitivity and entrepreneurship to empower community members to deliver authentic and meaningful experiences.	#Co-Lead	◆ IPCC ◆ Visit Albuquerque	◆ American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) ◆ Native American Communities

¹The City of Victoria, British Columbia, has established a collaboration with the Royal BC Museum, which has a dedicated Indigenous Cultural Center. Through regular meetings and collaboration sessions, the museum and local Indigenous communities co-create immersive experiences that promote their unique heritage and traditions. Extensive research and feasibility studies are conducted to identify themes, experiences and locations that align with their interests and capabilities. Community members, including leaders and elders, are actively involved, ensuring cultural authenticity and respect. This collaboration extends to marketing efforts, integrating Indigenous experiences into tourism itineraries and fostering inclusive partnerships with local organizations.



2. Expand Partnerships with City and State Entities to Target Niche High-Value Markets Interested in Unique Indigenous Experiences

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Forge partnerships with travel agencies, tour operators and organizations specializing in niche markets to expand the reach and visibility of Indigenous experiences. Collaborate in the development of packages and itineraries that specifically cater to the interests and desires of these target markets. ²	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) ◆ IPCC ◆ Native American Communities
Actively participate in niche travel trade shows and events that specifically cater to the identified high-value markets. Share ABQ’s Indigenous experiences, engage with industry professionals and establish connections to attract niche travelers seeking unique Native American encounters.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ IPCC ◆ Native American Communities
Capitalize on New Mexico's broader promotion of Indigenous experiences to develop marketing campaigns that emphasize the cultural significance and value of Indigenous experiences, targeting specific high-value markets through personalized digital marketing, partnerships with luxury travel operators, influencer collaborations and collaborative marketing initiatives tailored to their preferences. ³	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ IPCC ◆ Native American Communities
Support capacity building efforts within Native American communities by providing training programs in hospitality, immersive experiences and the development of guided tours. Empowering community members to take the lead in experience development ensures authenticity and respect for their culture and creates a sustainable and inclusive model for Indigenous tourism.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association (AIANTA) ◆ IPCC ◆ Native American Communities

²Tourism Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada, has established partnerships with tour operators specializing in Indigenous experiences. They offer tailored itineraries that highlight the unique heritage and traditions of the local Indigenous communities. Through market research and segmentation, they have identified niche high-value markets interested in these experiences and have crafted personalized marketing campaigns to engage these target markets.

³The Indigenous Tourism Association of Canada's "Original Original" campaign has brought together various Indigenous experiences across the country, effectively marketing to high-value international visitors seeking authentic cultural experiences.



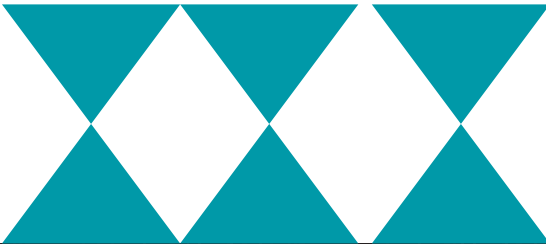
Culinary and Brewery Tourism

Albuquerque's unique Southwest cuisine, characterized by bold flavors and local ingredients, can be elevated through collaboration with local restaurants and chefs. As the visitor survey demonstrated that local culinary experiences are the most popular activities for visitors, further showcasing the distinct flavors, immersive experiences and traditional cooking techniques can help the City create a captivating culinary experience for visitors. Culinary events and festivals provide an ideal platform to immerse guests in Southwest cuisine, offering cooking demonstrations, tasting sessions and interactive workshops. To further promote Albuquerque's diverse culinary scene, curated culinary tourism packages can be developed in collaboration with local establishments, providing comprehensive food tours, cooking classes and agritourism experiences. These efforts will engage visitors, allowing them to discover Albuquerque's hidden culinary gems while experiencing the unique flavors of the region.

1. Elevate the Unique Southwestern Cuisine in Albuquerque as a Signature Product

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Elevate the profile and promotion of Albuquerque’s unique Southwest cuisine, highlighting its value by encouraging local restaurants, breweries and bars to create immersive experiences featuring Indigenous and New Mexican cuisine that captivate diners on multiple sensory levels and contribute to the destination activation efforts. Examples of these experiences could include pop-up restaurants or bars that materialize for a limited time with unique themes and concepts. ⁴ (Alignment with 2025 Marketing Plan)	#Support	Restaurants	◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association ◆ Visit Albuquerque
Continue highlighting the local ingredients, establishments, and traditional cooking techniques that make Southwestern and New Mexican cuisine distinct as one of Albuquerque’s signature products and experiences.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association ◆ Restaurants

⁴The Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta in Santa Fe, New Mexico, collaborates with local restaurants and chefs to showcase the region's unique Southwest cuisine. The festival features wine tastings and culinary events that highlight the flavors and ingredients of the Southwest.



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with the New Mexico Restaurant Association and local restaurateurs to actively promote and establish Albuquerque Restaurant Week, a dedicated event that showcases the city's culinary offerings. This support can include marketing campaigns, joint initiatives and assistance in organizing the event to attract both local and visiting food enthusiasts. (Alignment with 2025 Marketing Plan)	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association ◆ Restaurants
Promote cooking demonstrations, classes, and interactive farm-to-table experiences to provide diners with engaging opportunities to learn, participate, and enhance their culinary knowledge. (Alignment with 2025 Marketing Plan)	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Restaurants



2. Develop Food Trails and Culinary Tourism Packages that Highlight the Best Culinary Spots in Albuquerque

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Involve local culinary experts, food bloggers and influencers to design and develop food trails and guides that showcase the diverse culinary offerings of Albuquerque.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Local Chefs ◆ Local Influencers
Create visually appealing maps and guides that highlight the recommended culinary stops, providing visitors with easy navigation and enticing descriptions of each establishment. ⁵	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	
Collaborate with local culinary events or festivals to incorporate the food trails and guides as recommended itineraries, encouraging attendees to explore the wider culinary scene of Albuquerque.	#Support	-	◆ Event Organizers
Encourage local restaurants to incorporate QR codes in their menus, linking diners to information about the origin of the food and the farm or ranch it came from.	#Co-Lead	◆ Restaurants ◆ Visit Albuquerque	◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association
Regularly monitor, update and refresh the food trails and guides to accommodate new restaurant openings, closures and seasonal culinary offerings, ensuring an up-to-date and relevant experience for visitors. ⁶	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association

⁵ Traverse City in Michigan has developed the "Leelanau Peninsula Wine Trail" and the "Grand Traverse Pie Trail," which are self-guided food trails highlighting local wineries and pie shops. These trails provide maps, recommendations and information about each stop, allowing visitors to explore the culinary gems of the region.

⁶ Destination Toronto in Toronto, Canada, offers curated culinary tourism packages that provide visitors with a comprehensive experience of the city's diverse culinary scene. The packages include guided food tours, cooking classes and workshops on regional cuisine, showcasing the city's multicultural food offerings.



3. Explore Partnerships with Local Farmers, Breweries, Wineries, and Food Producers to Create a Farm-to-Table Concept

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Identify and develop partnerships with local farmers, breweries, wineries and food producers who prioritize sustainability, locally sourced ingredients and authentic food experiences. ⁷	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Breweries and Wineries ◆ Producers ◆ Local Farms ◆ Los Poblanos Historic Inn and Organic Farm ◆ Main Street Association ◆ Corrales, NM ◆ New Mexico Department of Agriculture
Collaborate with these partners to create experiences such as farm tours, culinary workshops and dining events that highlight the journey from the farm to the table.	#Co-Lead	◆ Visit Albuquerque ◆ Local Farms	◆ Event Organizers ◆ Farms ◆ New Mexico Department of Agriculture ◆ Restaurants
Incorporate the unique ABQ storytelling and educational elements into the farm-to-table experiences, providing insights into the cultural significance, history and traditions associated with the local ingredients and food production methods. This will also emphasize the significance of supporting local products and encouraging purchasing practices that prioritize local produce.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Breweries and Wineries ◆ Farms ◆ Los Poblanos Historic Inn and Organic Farm ◆ New Mexico Department of Agriculture ◆ Restaurants
Organize familiarization trips to local farms, enabling tourism industry stakeholders to experience agricultural operations firsthand and build connections with restaurants and suppliers. ⁸ This initiative aims to facilitate direct supply chains and promote the utilization of locally sourced ingredients between restaurants, hotels and local farms.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Farms ◆ New Mexico Department of Agriculture ◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association ◆ Restaurants
Advocate for the involvement of tourism industry representatives in statewide agricultural discussions.	#Advocate	Visit Albuquerque	◆ New Mexico Department of Agriculture

⁷ Sonoma County in California has established partnerships with local farmers, wineries and food producers to create a farm-to-table concept. The region hosts farm tours, culinary workshops and tasting events that highlight the journey from the farm to the table, showcasing the quality and freshness of locally sourced ingredients.

⁸ The "As Fresh as It Gets" program in San Mateo is an initiative that promotes local food production, sustainability and community well-being. It aims to connect consumers with local farmers and agricultural producers, providing access to fresh and locally grown food. Through farmer's markets, food festivals and educational events, the program highlights the importance of supporting local agriculture and the benefits of consuming fresh, seasonal produce. "As Fresh as It Gets" in San Mateo fosters a sense of community, supports local businesses, and promotes healthy lifestyle choices, all while celebrating the abundance of locally sourced food in the region.



Outdoor Recreation

Albuquerque's strategic partnerships with the City of Albuquerque's Parks and Recreation Department and Economic Development Department provide a strong foundation for positioning the city as a destination for diverse outdoor adventures such as cycling, golfing, hiking, birding, horseback riding, off-roading, bouldering, snow sports and river sports. Despite its proximity to skiing and outdoor recreation opportunities, Albuquerque is not commonly associated with these activities. While the city is among some of the largest metropolitan areas in the U.S. with easy access to skiing, it remains relatively unknown in terms of its outdoor recreation offerings compared to its cultural attractions and ballooning. The number of skiers visiting is significantly lower than the potential, resulting in a missed opportunity for economic impact, which could reach \$20-\$30 million.

To meet the expectations of outdoor enthusiasts, Albuquerque needs to focus on developing and promoting exceptional outdoor experiences. This includes leveraging its unique geographical advantages, such as the nearby Sandia Mountains, the Rio Grande and the sprawling desert landscapes. The following recommendations and strategies align with Visit Albuquerque's 2025 marketing plan initiatives while at the same time incorporate stakeholder, resident and visitor feedback throughout the planning process to focus on destination management as well.

1. Position Albuquerque as the Gateway to Outdoor Adventures and Raise Awareness of Existing Outdoor Recreation Products

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Continue raising awareness about Albuquerque's positioning as the premier gateway to outdoor adventures in New Mexico through strategic communication initiatives. This involves highlighting that if visitors establish their overnight base in Albuquerque, they will have easy and expansive access to a diverse range of outdoor recreation opportunities, showcasing the affordability of experiences, and emphasizing the advantage of fewer crowds compared to competing destinations. Enhance public relations activities and collaborate with travel influencers and bloggers to showcase the city's diverse outdoor offerings and accessibility.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation Division

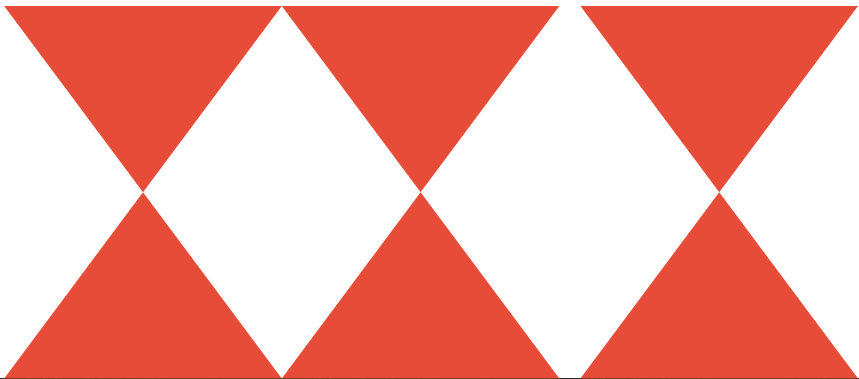
Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Establish partnerships with local outdoor organizations, outdoor gear companies, nature conservation groups and government entities to further promote Albuquerque as a destination for outdoor activities. Collaborate on joint initiatives, such as information campaigns, to highlight the city's natural assets and position it as a hub for adventure.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionNew Mexico State ParksOutdoor Gear CompaniesRio Grande Nature Center State ParkSandia Peak TramwaySki NMUniversity of New Mexico
Highlight the proximity of Albuquerque to natural attractions, such as national parks, scenic trails and outdoor recreation areas, to encourage visitors, especially those flying into Albuquerque International Sunport to use the city as a base for exploring the region.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque International SunportCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionOutdoor Gear Companies



2. Foster Collaboration to Upgrade, Expand and Diversify Outdoor Recreation Demand Drivers

Based on the evaluation of the Demand Driver Scorecard, it is evident that the majority of current demand drivers at the regional-national level are in the cultural category, with most outdoor recreation experiences and assets falling within the local demand driver category. To further amplify the appeal and draw visitors seeking outdoor adventures, additional investment and collaboration efforts are necessary.

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Garner investment and foster collaboration by engaging with local stakeholders, outdoor recreation businesses and government entities. Create a platform for regular dialogue and cooperation to enhance and diversify local demand drivers for outdoor recreational experiences.	#Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionOutdoor Gear CompaniesRio Grande Nature Center State ParkSandia Peak TramwaySki NMUniversity of New Mexico
Advocate for and support the modernization of the ski area infrastructure to align with industry standards and enhance the overall skiing experience. This includes advocating for an increased investment in improvements such as chairlift upgrades, snowmaking systems and other necessary facilities to ensure the ski areas are on par with other leading destinations.	#Advocate #Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Mountain Rescue CouncilCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionSki NM



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Encourage partnerships between Visit Albuquerque, outdoor businesses and educational institutions to organize workshops, seminars and training programs on outdoor safety, required safety gears and responsible tourism. These initiatives will raise awareness among locals and visitors alike, while supporting the growth and development of the local outdoor recreation sector.	# Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Mountain Rescue CouncilAlbuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionNew Mexico State ParksOutdoor Gear CompaniesRio Grande Nature Center State ParkSandia Peak TramwaySki NMUniversity of New Mexico
Identify and support local talent, entrepreneurs and small businesses that contribute to the outdoor recreation industry. Visit Albuquerque can act as a facilitator to connect outdoor recreation businesses to resources, mentorship programs and networking opportunities to help them thrive. This can be further developed by highlighting successful local businesses as examples of Visit Albuquerque's commitment to fostering innovation and sustainable growth within the outdoor recreation sector.	#Lead #Support	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Local Outdoor OrganizationsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionOutdoor Gear CompaniesSandia Peak TramwaySki NM
Actively seek partnerships and collaborations with race event organizers, such as running and cycling race organizers to host such events within the ABQ area.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentEvents OrganizersLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsOutdoor Gear CompaniesSports Organizers



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Advocate for the prioritization of the improvement, expansion and safety of our trail network to promote accessibility and diverse recreational opportunities. This includes completing the 50-mile bike loop, adding gravel cycling trails and conducting thorough repairs of existing bike paths, particularly the North Diversion Channel trail.	#Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsOutdoor Gear Companies
Collaborate with the City, community organizations and environmental groups to provide the tourism industry's input on enhancing access and activating the Rio Grande riverfront for outdoor recreational activities. This can include advocating for improving infrastructure, creating signage and wayfinding systems, and developing amenities such as picnic areas, viewpoints and points of interest that highlight the river's natural and cultural significance.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Mountain Rescue CouncilAlbuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionNew Mexico State ParksRio Grande Nature Center State Park

3. Foster Sustainable Tourism Practices and Environmental Stewardship

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Integrate sustainable tourism practices in visitor communication and outdoor recreation marketing materials by promoting responsible outdoor behaviors and environmental stewardship. Provide educational materials and resources that inform visitors about Leave No Trace principles, wildlife protection and responsible waste management during outdoor activities.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionNew Mexico State Parks
Collaborate with local environmental organizations and encourage partnerships with businesses to implement sustainable practices, such as recycling initiatives, reducing single-use plastics, and conserving energy and water resources. Organize volunteer programs and community clean-up events to engage visitors and locals in environmental preservation efforts.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Open Space DivisionCity of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation DepartmentLocal Outdoor OrganizationsNature Conservation GroupsNew Mexico Outdoor Recreation DivisionNew Mexico State Parks



Development and Diversification of New Products

Objective: *Develop new tourism products and critical mass with focus on cultural tourism and Route 66’s significant presence in Albuquerque.*

Route 66

Route 66, the iconic highway that holds a special place in the nation's history, runs through the heart of Albuquerque and is of significant importance to the city. With Albuquerque boasting the longest continuous urban stretch of Route 66, spanning 18 miles, this historic road is a vital part of the city's tourism assets. From the Route 66 Visitors Center to key tourism corridors like Downtown, Nob Hill, Old Town and the Baretas neighborhood, Albuquerque offers a range of attractions and experiences tied to this famous route. As an integral component of the city's identity, Route 66 attracts both domestic and international visitors, contributing to Albuquerque's tourism industry and cultural heritage. However, to truly maximize the impact of Route 66 tourism, it is crucial to ensure that the overall experience rises to the level of inspiring an overnight stay.

Recognizing the significance of Route 66 and its potential to become a major tourism draw, investment and enhancement efforts should be prioritized to transform Route 66 into a destination of its own in Albuquerque. By preserving its historical charm while introducing new attractions and amenities to niche market segments, the city can capitalize on the allure of this iconic highway, attract more visitors and create a memorable experience that celebrates the rich heritage of Route 66 in Albuquerque.

1. Declare And Enhance Route 66 As the Ultimate Experience

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Spearhead a task force with partners such as the City and University of New Mexico on Route 66 to position it as a destination and advocate for enhancement and improvement initiatives.	#Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureVisit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Park ServiceNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work with partners to support and advocate for the tourism case for necessary improvements to infrastructure along Route 66, including road maintenance, directional signage and historical markers.	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNational Park ServiceNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico
Collaborate with local artists to create large-scale murals and public art installations that depict the history and culture of Route 66.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationUniversity of New Mexico
Work with local businesses to create exclusive Route 66-themed products and experiences.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)Greater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceLocal ABQ BusinessesNew Mexico Small Business Development Center (NM SBDC)Small Business Administration (SBA)
Work with event organizers to support events and festivals that celebrate the spirit of Route 66, such as car shows, live music performances and vintage fairs.	#Support	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureEvent OrganizersNew Mexico Department of Cultural AffairsNew Mexico Tourism Department



2. Collaborate with City of Albuquerque and UNM on Route 66 Venues and Ongoing Development

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work with City of Albuquerque and newly established Route 66 Visitor Center Commission to establish future usage and focus of Route 66 Visitors Center.	#Support	City of Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentRoute 66 Visitor Center CommissionUniversity of New Mexico
Establish a partnership with UNM and the future Route 66 National Research Center to develop a joint marketing campaign promoting the significance of Route 66.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico
Explore opportunities for joint branding initiatives, such as co-branded merchandise and promotional materials.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico
Consider collaborating with the Graduate hotel chain, known for its association with universities, to establish a hotel concept that celebrates Route 66’s history and complements the research center.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Graduate Hotel Chain

3. Create Immersive Experiences and Itineraries for Elevating the Profile of Route 66

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with Route 66 Visitors Center, City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture, UNM, the potential future National Route 66 Research Center and other relevant partners to develop themed itineraries highlighting unique attributes of Route 66, such as the experience of movement to the ‘west’, historic diners and motels, old movies, regional cuisine and car culture.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of AlbuquerqueNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Partner with private companies, the film industry and technology experts to advocate for creating immersive VR and AR experiences that bring Route 66’s history to life.	#Support	City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureFilm CrewsNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationPrivate PartnersTechnology FirmsUniversity of New Mexico
Establish partnerships with local attractions, museums and cultural institutions to offer discounted or bundled experiences that encourage visitors to explore Route 66 fully.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico
Collaborate with travel agencies and tour operators to include Route 66 as a featured itinerary in their offerings.	#Co-Lead #Support	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Inbound Tour OperatorsNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico

4. Enhance Route 66 as the ‘Key to the West’ to Garner Investment

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Conduct targeted marketing campaigns to raise awareness among potential investors about the cultural and economic opportunities associated with Route 66 and its car culture. These targeted campaigns should include more niche market segments that currently are not a big focus of Visit Albuquerque, such as car enthusiasts and history buffs.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentRoute 66 Museum in TucumcariUniversity of New Mexico



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work with the City and potential developers and investors to highlight the benefits of investing in Route 66-related businesses, such as themed hotels, retro-style diners and vintage car rental services.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of AlbuquerqueNational Route 66 AssociationNew Mexico Route 66 Association
Collaborate with economic development agencies to provide incentives and support systems for investors interested in starting or expanding businesses along Route 66.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentAlbuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Business Development CenterGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceSmall Business Administration (SBA)New Mexico Small Business Development Center (NM SBDC)
Collaborate with UNM and the National Research Center for Route 66 to curate exhibitions, interactive displays and educational programs.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">National Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 AssociationUniversity of New Mexico
Partner with the City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture, UNM and the National Route 66 Research Center to support Visit Albuquerque's current initiative of creating a microsite dedicated to Route 66. This collaboration can bring forth valuable insights, research and resources to ensure the microsite becomes a comprehensive hub of information and engagement. Additionally, the microsite can serve as a valuable long-lasting legacy and resource of the Route 66 Centennial Celebration for those seeking in-depth information about Route 66's history, cultural importance, and ongoing preservation efforts.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureNational Route 66 AssociationRoute 66 AssociationUniversity of New Mexico



Arts & Cultural Heritage Tourism

Albuquerque is a city that harmonizes the worlds of science and art, showcasing the contributions of notable figures in each realm. In the realm of technology, Bill Gates and Paul Allen famously founded Microsoft in Albuquerque in 1975, operating out of a small office in the city before relocating to Washington state. In the arts, renowned author Rudolfo Anaya, best known for his novel "Bless Me, Ultima," lived and worked in Albuquerque for much of his life. The city also nurtured the talents of Neil Patrick Harris, who began his acting career as a child in Albuquerque before achieving widespread fame. In the sciences, Albuquerque has been a hub for research and development, particularly due to the presence of Sandia National Laboratories. Notable scientists like Paul Hommert, who served as the director of Sandia Labs from 2010 to 2015, have contributed significantly to national security and energy research while based in Albuquerque. Additionally, the University of New Mexico has been home to numerous accomplished researchers and academics across various scientific disciplines, further cementing Albuquerque's place in the scientific community.

Albuquerque also embraces the rich diversity of its people. The city takes pride in various cultural expressions, such as the lowriders cruising Central Avenue with admiration for their stunning cars. It also cherishes traditions like the annual Gathering of Nations, a Native American ceremonial gathering, and the Ty Murray Invitational, a prestigious cowboy rodeo event. Additionally, Albuquerque celebrates the Mariachi Spectacular, showcasing the artistry and performances of talented Mariachi bands; and boasts some of the finest flamenco dance artists outside of Spain, further exemplifying its commitment to honoring diverse cultural expressions.

1. Develop and Promote Cultural Packages Around Key Signature Events

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with local assets and attractions along with leisure event organizers to create cultural tourism packages around key events like the Balloon Fiesta. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop promotional packaging to describe destination experiences and the appeal to the targeted markets.Determine in-house and third-party vehicles to support the fulfillment of experiences for visitors who want to secure a multiple day stay with a designated "package".	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersAlbuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural CenterPrivate Investment and Development Partners

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Develop a comprehensive visitor experience program by providing package and itinerary suggestions in ticket confirmation emails. This involves partnering with local tour operators and attractions to offer recommendations for activities such as hiking, golfing, exploring filming locations, visiting historic neighborhoods and enjoying local cuisine in order to capture more overnight visitors from within the event attendees.	#Co-Lead	Third Party Fulfillment Companies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersPrivate Investment and Development PartnersTour Operators
Create special cultural tourism packages exclusively for residents. Offer discounted rates or unique experiences that highlight the local heritage, arts and cultural attractions.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersAlbuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural CenterPrivate Investment and Development Partners



2. Collaborate with Museums Along Museum Row to Create a Cohesive Museum Trail Experience

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Create a unified marketing campaign to promote the Museum Trail as a must-visit cultural experience. Collaborate with participating museums to develop a joint marketing strategy that includes targeted advertising, social media campaigns and discounted multi-ticket museum packages or passes.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque MuseumsCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural Center
Enhance the visitor experience along the Museum Trail by implementing a seamless navigation system through the proposed Cultural Tourism Connector and enhancing visitor amenities. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Work with the Planning and Municipal Development Departments to install clear signage and wayfinding markers, both outdoors and within the museums, to guide visitors along the trail.Provide digital maps and interactive apps that offer information about exhibits, hours of operation, and special events.Ensure visitor amenities like restrooms, parking facilities, and seating areas are easily accessible and well-maintained.	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersAlbuquerque MuseumsCity of AlbuquerqueAlbuquerque Transit DepartmentDepartment of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural CenterPrivate Investment and Development Partners
Foster collaboration among participating museums to offer joint programming and cross-promotion. Plan special events, exhibition openings and educational programs that coincide across several museums along the trail.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque MuseumsCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural Center
Encourage joint ticketing or discounted entry fees for visitors wishing to explore multiple museums.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque MuseumsCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural Center

3. Work With City and State Governments to Secure Funding for Investment in Arts and Cultural Products and Expand their Volume to Enhance the Cultural Tourism Offerings

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with strategic public and private sector partners to conduct a short-term feasibility study and listening sessions for developing a new iconic feature that leverages the city's unique natural and cultural assets, and will elevate the city's awareness and prominence. This process should include a competitive process for services on location scouting, market analysis and interest holder engagement. This effort will have a far-reaching impact, benefiting economic development, enhancing the overall quality of life, and attracting new visitors. To ensure the successful development of this high-profile "icon," it is crucial to engage a broad spectrum of partners who stand to benefit from its completion.	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNative American CommunitiesNational Hispanic Cultural CenterPrivate Investment and Development Partners
To achieve these goals and secure the necessary funding and support, various potential sources can be explored. Private sector partners, foundations, and public sector entities can be approached for financial contributions, aligning with predetermined measures and economic development strategies. It may be beneficial to initiate a competitive process to garner diverse ideas and perspectives on the desired direction for the project. Tactics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop and confirm individualized advocacy and engagement plans for each project, outlining specific strategies and actions to drive support and participation.Share the results of the Demand Driver Scorecard with asset operators and involve them in the assessment of their respective assets, fostering a collaborative approach to improve performance and enhance market appeal.Collaborate with the City to establish a grant program or partnership model that aims to secure funding from potential stakeholders, ensuring targeted investment to support the development of key assets.Implement a launch program to support asset development.	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Assets and Attraction ManagersCity of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural CenterPrivate Investment and Development Partners



Events & Festivals

Objective: Enhance and diversify the events and festivals landscape in ABQ by implementing a comprehensive strategy that includes collaborations with event organizers and regional partners and that leverages existing partnerships, with the aim of extending event programming beyond traditional busy seasons and establishing an additional signature event/festival.

Situational Analysis

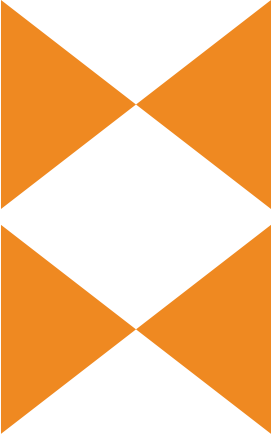
Events are vital to Albuquerque's tourism landscape, serving as powerful catalysts for economic growth and cultural vibrancy. They not only attract overnight visitors but also inject significant economic activity into the local economy, showcasing Albuquerque's unique offerings to a wider audience. The importance of events extends beyond mere attendance figures; they create lasting impressions, foster community pride and contribute to the overall appeal of Albuquerque as a destination.

As mentioned in the [Market Study](#) section in more detail, an in-depth analysis conducted as part of this project has revealed compelling trends and insights specific to Albuquerque's event landscape. The Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta and the Gathering of Nations events were identified as the key signature events in Albuquerque, which together attract nearly 1 million guests each year.

Within the Event Matrix analysis, of the 22 events studied, based on feedback from the engagement process and the Visit Albuquerque team, 50% (11 events) are positioned to drive global, national and regional overnight demand to Albuquerque. This highlights the city's potential as a cultural tourism destination capable of attracting visitors from across the country and around the world.

Interestingly, the study found that 50% of demand-generator events in Albuquerque are held in September and October, indicating a strong concentration of major events during these months. However, it's worth noting that only 30% of total events are held during shoulder seasons, from November to March. This was further corroborated during the engagement process. While the Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta is the key signature event for Albuquerque, stakeholders and the Steering Committee emphasized the need for an additional signature event during the shoulder season to increase visitation to Albuquerque in the long-term. Events such as South by Southwest in Austin and the Art + Sol Festival in Santa Fe were cited as examples for this initiative. This presents an opportunity for Visit Albuquerque to expand and diversify events during these off-peak periods, thereby extending reach, optimizing visitor yield and creating a more balanced year-round event calendar.

The strategic development, engagement and promotion of events can address key challenges in Albuquerque's tourism sector, such as seasonality. Visit Albuquerque would formalize an internal leisure events calendar for events taking place during the shoulder season. By focusing on creating an internal calendar and supporting events during shoulder seasons, Visit Albuquerque can help smooth out visitor numbers throughout the year, reducing the impact of peak and off-peak periods on local businesses.



It is worth noting that in a significant move to bolster Albuquerque's event landscape, Visit Albuquerque has implemented a forward-thinking Tourism Grant program, allocating 5% of the annual Albuquerque Tourism Marketing District (ATMD) revenue to support innovative tourism initiatives. This program, which has reached a significant level of \$510,000 in funding in 2024, aims to catalyze creative ideas that contribute to Albuquerque's vibrancy and develop new, engaging experiences for both visitors and residents.

Recommendations

1. Proactively Implement JLL’s Event Matrix for Existing and New Events

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Implement the Event Matrix as a standard assessment tool for evaluating current and potential events, ensuring alignment with Visit Albuquerque's goals and maximizing impact. This will support proactively reaching out to existing events with potential to grow, as well as the development of new events. It is recommended that Visit Albuquerque meet individually with the relevant event organizers and establish specific joint marketing and operational support plans. The key to these plans is focusing on evolving the events in programming (if needed) and enhancing targeted marketing to drive audiences with a propensity to have a multiple-day experience in Albuquerque.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & CultureEvent OrganizersEvent VenuesIndian Pueblo Cultural CenterNational Hispanic Cultural Center
Expand the usage of Destination International's Event Impact Calculator (EIC) to make it the accepted standard for all event reporting metrics and share the benefits and outcomes with all event organizers in the region. The EIC is a nationally recognized measurement tool currently used by over 300 destination management/marketing and marketing organizations nationwide. The implementation of an EIC will allow event organizers to accurately track the economic impact and benefits generated by their events. This tool is essential for quantifying the value and success of events and providing valuable and consistent data that can be used to attract future events and secure additional funding and support. Visit Albuquerque can leverage the EIC data to make data-driven decisions regarding investments and partnerships with specific events.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce's Convention & Tourism DepartmentCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentEvent Organizers

2. Segment Visit Albuquerque’s Tourism Grants Program to Dedicate Funding for Event Development

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Enhance and restructure the Visit Albuquerque Tourism Grants Program to maximize its impact on the city's event landscape. Clearly segment the existing Tourism Grant fund to create a dedicated events-related grant pool, with a clearly designated limit on funding per event, as well as a timeline (e.g. up to 5 years), for funding the same event. This specialized fund should be designed to support events that demonstrate strong potential for driving tourism and economic impact and can demonstrate a path to self-sufficiency. It is recommended that Visit Albuquerque fully integrate the Event Matrix criteria into the grant application and evaluation process, ensuring that funded events align with Albuquerque's tourism goals and brand identity.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	Event Organizers
Allocate a portion of Visit Albuquerque's grant program funds toward "transformative" event ideas – those with the potential to become additional signature events for Albuquerque, attract national or international attention or significantly boost off-season visitation.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	Event Organizers



3. Develop a Regional Event Calendaring Approach to Target Low Seasons

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with event organizers and create an event programming and business development strategy that extends beyond the traditional busy seasons, targeting low seasons, especially from November to March, to drive visitation during these periods. ⁹	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	Event Organizers
Work with regional partners to expand Visit Albuquerque's internal event calendar to a regional schedule, to further identify seasonality gaps and overlapping events and assess potential areas for joint marketing.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Bernalillo County◆ City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture◆ Indian Pueblo Cultural Center◆ National Hispanic Cultural Center◆ New Mexico Arts◆ New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs◆ New Mexico Tourism Department◆ Sandoval County Tourism Alliance◆ TOURISM Santa Fe◆ Visit Taos
Meet with event organizers on a regular basis to exchange ideas for further programming or marketing to enhance the overall experience and target and measure success with targeted audiences.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	Event Organizers

⁹Every year, Doors Open Toronto invites the public to explore the city's most-loved buildings and sites, free of charge. The event provides rare access to buildings that are not usually open to the public and free access to sites that would usually charge an admission fee. Since its inception in 2000, it has attracted more than 2 million visits in the shoulder seasons to nearly 700 unique locations and remains the largest event of its kind in Canada.

4. Support the Creation of a Signature, Week-Long Cultural Festival That Showcases Albuquerque's Diverse Artistic and Cultural Assets

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
<p>Collaborate with local and statewide partners to develop a multi-faceted event similar to Austin’s South by Southwest (SXSW) or Art + Sol in Santa Fe, leveraging existing venues and talent in performing arts, flamenco and other cultural expressions. This festival should aim to become a major draw outside of the Balloon Fiesta season, filling a gap in the city's event calendar. Several ideas that were surfaced and repeated throughout the master planning process included a headline culinary event centered around green chile, capitalizing on the city's renowned cuisine and creating a new gastronomic tradition; and a cutting-edge science and technology fair that positions Albuquerque as a vibrant tech hub, attracting industry professionals and innovators. Tactics include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Utilize Event Matrix analysis to identify and invest in events that show growth potential and align with Albuquerque's brand identity.◆ Create and implement a strategic outreach program to educate event organizers on the Event Matrix and its role in boosting overnight visitation.◆ Establish Destination International's Event Impact Calculator (EIC) as the gold standard for measuring and reporting event performance.◆ Conduct a comprehensive analysis to pinpoint events capable of drawing overnight visitors during off-peak seasons.◆ Support assembly of a diverse coalition of stakeholders to brainstorm and develop concepts for a flagship event that elevates Albuquerque's profile and increases tourism.◆ Participate in crafting a detailed proposal and operational framework for the new signature event.◆ Help build community and stakeholder support to ensure successful implementation of the signature event.◆ Work with event organizers and stakeholders in finding potential public and private funding partners.◆ Support the execution of the inaugural edition of the newly created signature event.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department◆ Event Organizers◆ Indian Pueblo Cultural Center◆ Local nonprofit arts organizations◆ National Hispanic Cultural Center◆ New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs◆ New Mexico Tourism Department◆ Private Investment and Development Partners

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Encourage development of "pop-up" events that occur Downtown during conventions and meetings to bring vibrancy to the area for meeting attendees.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department◆ Event Organizers◆ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Work with the City of Albuquerque, the program producers, local event producers and concert promoters, and regional or national sponsors to help expand "Bands of Enchantment" into a multi-day music festival.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Albuquerque Film Office◆ City of Albuquerque Arts & Culture Department◆ Event Producers◆ New Mexico Tourism Department◆ Potential Sponsors◆ Program Producers
Collaborate with the New Mexico Tourism Department to secure investment from various sources, such as the State Capital Outlay funding for event infrastructure improvements, including venue upgrades, parking facilities or outdoor event spaces, to accommodate a wider range of events.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Bernalillo County◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department◆ City of Albuquerque Parks & Recreation Department◆ EXPO New Mexico◆ Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce◆ New Mexico Arts◆ New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs◆ New Mexico Tourism Department◆ Private Investment and Development Partners



Downtown Development & Activation

Objective: Revitalize downtown Albuquerque to create a vibrant, safe and attractive urban core that serves as a focal point for tourism and economic growth.

Situational Analysis

Albuquerque's Downtown stands as a testament to the city's ongoing urban renaissance, blending its rich historical heritage with modern developments. The area has undergone significant transformation in recent years, breathing new life into the urban core and offering visitors a unique Southwest experience.

While rich in potential, Downtown currently faces a complex set of challenges that impact the city's urban core and its appeal to visitors and residents alike. The area has struggled with persistent issues that have hindered its full revitalization, creating a mixed landscape of progress and setbacks.

One of the most visible challenges is the ongoing problem of the unhoused. The area has seen a noticeable increase in the unhoused population, leading to encampments in public spaces and vacant lots. This situation has created concerns about public safety and cleanliness, often deterring visitors and potential investors. Local businesses have reported difficulties in maintaining their customer base due to these issues, with some choosing to relocate or close altogether.

Crime rates in Downtown have also been a point of concern. Efforts have been made to increase police presence and implement community policing strategies, leading to a 20% to 30% decrease in crime in 2023, according to the Albuquerque Police Department. However, incidents of property crime and occasional violent crime continue to make headlines. This perception of insecurity has had a negative effect on nightlife and evening activities, with many residents and visitors hesitant to venture Downtown after dark.

Vacancy rates in commercial properties present another challenge. Despite some successful redevelopment projects, many storefronts and office spaces remain empty, creating a sense of urban decay in certain blocks. This has led to a chicken-and-egg scenario where the lack of foot traffic discourages new businesses from opening, while the scarcity of retail and dining options fails to attract more visitors.

On a more positive note, there have been continuous and concerted efforts to address these issues from a number of stakeholders and agencies. The City administration and local stakeholders are actively working to address the complex issues that have hindered the area's growth and appeal.

The City of Albuquerque has implemented programs aimed at providing services to the unhoused population and has worked on strategies to encourage economic development. Several successful mixed-use projects have brought new residential units to the area, potentially increasing the 24/7 population needed to support a vibrant urban core.

Downtown has also seen some wins in terms of cultural, dining and lodging options. The renovation of historic buildings like the KiMo Theatre, the 505 Central Food Hall (formerly a Sears and Roebuck), Ex Novo Brewing Company (formerly a Firestone auto repair shop) and ARRIVE Hotel (formerly the Downtowner), as well as the success of events like the Downtown Growers' Market and ABQ Artwalk, have shown the potential for creating engaging public spaces. These bright spots demonstrate that with continued effort and investment, downtown Albuquerque could overcome its challenges.

In 2024, proposals were introduced to create both a Business Improvement District (BID) and a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District. The TIF requires City Council approval, while the BID requires approval of business owners in the district. These initiatives would empower Downtown property owners to collectively manage resources and invest in improvements to the area. Such measures could lead to enhanced security, cleanliness and overall attractiveness of the district, addressing some of the persistent issues that have deterred visitors and businesses.

The Albuquerque Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) is a key player in the city's urban revitalization efforts, particularly focused on Downtown and other designated redevelopment areas. As the MRA works to leverage public and private partnerships to stimulate growth, address blight and create vibrant, walkable neighborhoods, there is a lot of synergy and alignment with the Destination Master Plan and areas where the tourism industry and MRA can collaborate. MRA's efforts include facilitating mixed-use developments, improving public spaces, supporting arts and cultural initiatives, and enhancing infrastructure to attract businesses and residents.

The Downtown Forward Plan outlines Albuquerque's vision for revitalizing its urban core. The plan, developed by MRA and Albuquerque Police Department, aims to create a safe, vibrant and inclusive community in downtown Albuquerque.

The plan recognizes that downtown Albuquerque, despite occupying only 1% of the city's area, has a disproportionate economic and fiscal impact, accounting for 6% of the city's employment. However, the area faces significant challenges, including safety concerns, homelessness and the need for economic revitalization.



To address these issues, the Downtown Forward Plan proposes seven key strategies:

1. Increasing activities and event development and growth Downtown to attract more visitors and keep workers in the area after business hours.
2. Building more housing to increase the residential population and support local businesses.
3. Investing in strategic projects like the Rail Yards redevelopment, the Albuquerque Rail Trail¹⁰ and the Next Generation Media Academy to catalyze economic growth.
4. Implementing sustainability initiatives, including renewable energy projects and improving public transportation.
5. Enhancing public safety through increased police presence, technology deployment and community policing efforts.
6. Extending compassion to those in need by expanding shelter capacity and providing services to the homeless population.
7. Creating new tools for redevelopment, including establishing a place management organization and seeking changes to state code to increase funding for redevelopment projects.

The plan emphasizes the need for public-private partnerships and a sustained, multi-pronged approach to overcome the challenges facing downtown Albuquerque. It outlines specific initiatives under each strategy, such as providing grants to businesses, implementing a property tax exemption for new developments, and launching the Downtown TEAM (Targeted Enforcement and Active Monitoring) initiative for improved public safety.

The City of Albuquerque is committing over \$54 million in investment, leveraging an additional \$129 million in potential public and private funding for Downtown revitalization. The plan acknowledges that success will require ongoing collaboration between the City, businesses, residents and other stakeholders to implement and refine these strategies over time.

The Destination Master Plan's key priorities closely align with the City's priorities as outlined in the Downtown Forward Plan. While downtown Albuquerque continues to grapple with challenges, there's a sense of optimism and potential for growth. The proposed BID and TIF, combined with efforts to increase the number of Downtown residents and strategic development projects like the Rail Trail, could mark a turning point for the area. The coming years will be crucial in determining whether these initiatives can successfully address the longstanding issues and unlock downtown Albuquerque's full potential as a vibrant urban center.

¹⁰The Rail Trail project in Albuquerque is a planned urban parkway that aims to transform a 7-mile stretch of underutilized railroad tracks into a multi-use path connecting Downtown to other parts of the city. It's designed to enhance pedestrian and cyclist connectivity, promote economic development, and create new public spaces.



Recommendations

1. Advocate for and Support Downtown Development Projects to Encourage Revitalization on Behalf of the Tourism Industry and Through the Visitor Lens

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Align with, and complement, the Downtown Redevelopment Plan by the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) as well as future Downtown plans and initiatives.	#Support #Advocate	-	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)</div> <div><div></div> City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>
Work with the New Mexico Finance Authority to explore potential debt relief options for Albuquerque's Lodgers' Tax debt to free up resources for investment in catalytic projects that benefit both the State of New Mexico and Albuquerque as its major metropolitan area.	#Support #Advocate	-	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)</div> <div><div></div> City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div> <div><div></div> New Mexico Municipal League</div>
Promote the development of pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, public spaces and outdoor gathering areas to enhance walkability, social interactions and community engagement.	#Support #Advocate	-	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Planning Department</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>
Collaborate with city planners and local stakeholders to support the development of Rail Trail and integrate tourism-friendly features such as pedestrian parkways and organized events that showcase local culture and history. Promote the Rail Trail as a unique urban experience for visitors, emphasizing its role in connecting key Downtown areas and its potential to revitalize the urban core.	#Support	-	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Planning Department</div> <div><div></div> Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)</div> <div><div></div> City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>
Advocate for the designation of a "Convention Corridor" in Downtown with signage that welcomes visitors and creates a cohesive look for the area.	#Co-Lead #Advocate	Visit Albuquerque	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Convention Center</div> <div><div></div> Albuquerque Planning Department</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work with city partners to allocate funds for beautification projects and regular maintenance of Downtown spaces to ensure a visually appealing and well-maintained Downtown area.	#Support	-	<div><div></div> Albuquerque Planning Department</div> <div><div></div> Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)</div> <div><div></div> City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department</div> <div><div></div> City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture</div> <div><div></div> Downtown ABQ MainStreet and Arts & Culture District</div> <div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>
Partner with the local news media to report on the value of community investment in Downtown projects, highlighting successful examples like the Ex Novo Brewing Co., ARRIVE Hotel and Imperial Inn development projects.	#Support	-	<div><div></div> Local News Media Partners</div>
Advocate for increased public safety measures within the existing infrastructure, such as enhanced lighting in specific areas, to create a safe and welcoming Downtown environment. ¹¹	#Advocate	-	<div><div></div> Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>

¹¹Visit Orlando, the official tourism organization for Orlando, Florida, has implemented several safety initiatives to ensure the well-being of visitors and residents. One notable program is the Orlando Visitor Safety Initiative, which involves collaboration with local law enforcement, tourism businesses and community organizations. This initiative focuses on:

- **Crime Prevention:** Providing safety tips and resources to visitors, such as information on safe neighborhoods, transportation options and personal security measures.
- **Emergency Response:** Establishing protocols for coordinating emergency response efforts and ensuring timely assistance to visitors in need.
- **Community Partnerships:** Working with local organizations to promote safety awareness and address specific crime concerns within the community.
- **Public Safety Campaigns:** Launching public awareness campaigns to educate visitors and residents about safety issues and prevention strategies.



2. Support Legislation and Funding Solutions Proposed by the City for Downtown Development and Revitalization

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Support the development and formalization of a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District and Downtown Business Improvement District to improve and enhance the Downtown experience. ¹² Further information on the value of TIF is included in the Funding section of this plan.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentMetropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Partner with economic development agencies and business associations to identify specific needs and create tailored incentives for retail and restaurant activations, particularly during evenings and shoulder seasons to enhance Downtown vibrancy for residents and visitors alike.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentMetropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)

¹²Tucson's Rio Nuevo downtown revitalization project stands as a compelling case study in the effective use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for urban renewal. Established in 1999 with a 30-year horizon, the project demonstrated a long-term commitment to transforming the city's core. By leveraging public funds to attract private investment, Rio Nuevo fostered a symbiotic relationship between public and private sectors, amplifying the impact of initial investments. The project's emphasis on preserving Tucson's rich cultural heritage, coupled with its promotion of mixed-use development, created a vibrant, multifaceted downtown environment. Significant infrastructure improvements, funded through TIF, laid the groundwork for sustainable growth. After facing initial challenges, the implementation of an independent oversight board ensured transparency and effective fund management. The initiative's focus on adaptive reuse of existing structures and the development of strategic anchor projects, such as the expanded convention center and streetcar system, catalyzed further private sector engagement. Throughout its evolution, Rio Nuevo maintained flexibility in its planning approach, adapting to market shifts and community needs. This responsiveness, combined with ongoing community engagement, ensured that revitalization efforts remained aligned with local aspirations. Tucson's experience with Rio Nuevo illustrates how TIF, when applied thoughtfully and with proper oversight, can be a powerful tool for stimulating urban revitalization and creating lasting positive change in downtown areas.



3. Collaborate with City Partners on Streamlining the Permitting and Licensing Processes for Small Tourism-Facing Businesses

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Develop clear and defined recognition for "tourism-facing" small businesses to open funding avenues, grant opportunities and tailored incentives. Tourism-facing businesses can include hotels, local restaurants, specialty retailers, attractions and events that generate overnight visitation.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Business Development CenterCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceNew Mexico Small Business Development Center (NM SBDC)Small Business Administration (SBA)
Serve as the local facilitator for providing resources and assistance in navigating small business regulations and processes. This could take several shapes; an example includes development of a QR code for a "how-to" guide on starting a business and accessing resources and distributing the QR code across Downtown.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Business Development CenterCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentDevelopment Center (NM SBDC)Greater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceNew Mexico Small Business Administration (SBA)

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with economic development agencies to advocate for streamlining the permitting and licensing procedures for small businesses to reduce the time required for opening, particularly for tourism-facing small businesses, and for incentivizing development and investment in Downtown. ¹³	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Business Development CenterCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentDevelopment Center (NM SBDC)Greater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceNew Mexico Small BusinessSmall Business Administration (SBA)
Collaborate with partners to create a one-stop shop for small business owners and increase awareness among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) about available resources, education opportunities and support, potentially through a tourism-related businesses platform. ¹⁴	#Support #Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Business Development CenterCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceNew Mexico Small Business Development Center (NM SBDC)Small Business Administration (SBA)

¹³In San Francisco, legislation was approved in 2023 to streamline permitting for small businesses, with a focus on filling commercial vacancies and encouraging economic recovery. The legislation includes over 100 changes to the Planning Code, allowing for more business uses on the ground floor, lifting restrictions on bars and restaurants in specific corridors, incorporating a new liquor license for music venues, removing public notice requirements in certain districts, and enabling priority processing for nighttime entertainment, bars and restaurants. These efforts build upon previous reforms and initiatives implemented by Mayor London N. Breed over the last few years to simplify the small business permitting process and support economic growth in the city.

¹⁴The New Mexico State Tourism Department implemented a similar approach by putting together a [Tour Operator Toolkit](#), leveraging business development assistance and resources available through the state, Chambers of Commerce, Destination Marketing Organizations, non-profit incubators and business accelerators. This Toolkit allows for self-assessment of ‘readiness’ to start a business, followed by information and resources on ‘navigating the red tape’ through compiling a wealth of information from relevant partners across the state.



Infrastructure & Facilities



Transportation & Connectivity

Objective: *Collaborate with transportation partners to connect Albuquerque neighborhoods for better resident and visitor accessibility.*

Situational Analysis

Albuquerque, known for its distance between neighborhoods, faces unique transportation challenges that impact residents and visitors. Although most residents travel by private vehicle, traffic congestion in the city is minimal compared to other urban areas. Perhaps because of the ease of getting around by car, the 188-square-mile city has limited public transportation options, with a bus system serving as the main form of mass transit. While efforts have been made to improve public transportation infrastructure and expand service routes, gaps in coverage and frequency still exist.

Throughout the planning process and across engagement, competitive benchmarking and utilizing JLL products such as the Tourism Readiness Index, it was revealed that each of the city’s neighborhoods has a walkable environment, but they lack connectivity between one another, creating difficulty in traversing the city, especially for visitors. JLL also studied different modes of transportation and their availability in Albuquerque, identifying gaps and areas for improvement. The initial research showed that the overall walk score for the city is relatively low, at 43, yet the neighborhood-specific scores are high, with scores ranging from 60 to 88, indicating that the neighborhoods themselves are walkable. The overall transit score is even lower at 29, indicating that most errands require a car and there are limited public transportation options available.

These opportunities were echoed in the stakeholder survey, where respondents cited the sprawl and lack of walkability in Albuquerque as a significant weakness, leading to car dependency. Furthermore, the inadequate public transportation system, with limited routes and hours of operation, was identified as another weakness, hindering accessibility and convenience for both residents and tourists.

Despite these challenges, Albuquerque has made efforts to address transportation issues through investments in the expansion of the Rapid Ride bus service, Rail Runner, All Aboard America, and development of multi-use trails and exploration of transportation programs such as bike and scooter sharing programs. However, there is still an opportunity to create a more efficient, connected and sustainable transportation system. Enhancing inter-neighborhood connectivity, expanding public transportation options and improving walkability are critical steps in overcoming the limitations identified by stakeholders and improving the overall transportation experience in Albuquerque.

To this point, the project team met with Z-trip, an innovative mobility and ridesharing platform that seamlessly integrates with a city's existing transit infrastructure to enhance urban transportation and tourism experiences. Originally designed as a microtransit solution, Z-trip has evolved to offer a dual-purpose app that serves both residents and visitors. Throughout the engagement process, Z-trip expressed interest in expanding partnerships with the City and Visit Albuquerque to customize the app for providing a comprehensive city guide and transportation solution. This collaborative approach allows for the development of solutions that can connect various aspects of the visitor experience - from airport arrivals to local exploration - helping cities like Albuquerque create a more cohesive, accessible and enjoyable tourism ecosystem.

Collaboration among local stakeholders, transportation experts and community organizations will be essential in identifying and implementing effective strategies towards a more interconnected transportation network. By prioritizing investments in transportation infrastructure and focusing on public transportation enhancements, Albuquerque can improve accessibility, reduce car dependency and create a more enjoyable experience for both residents and visitors. The following recommendations have been developed based on competitive research, JLL products and outcomes, and comprehensive stakeholder engagement through focus groups, interviews with the relevant infrastructure-related entities and surveys.



Recommendations

1. Support Enhancements to Transportation Services by Engaging with Applicable Entities and Providing a Visitor Lens

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Explore public-private partnerships with the following transportation modes and entities in Albuquerque to expand transportation services to further visitor mobility beyond the Downtown core, especially between neighborhoods such as Uptown, Old Town, Nob Hill, Sawmill and Barelas.	#Support	-	◆ ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department) ◆ New Mexico Rail Runner Express ◆ Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)
Public Transportation ◆ Support the Transit Department in expanding the Connect Program to zones frequently visited by visitors and explore the potential for expanding the service on the weekends as well. ◆ Collaborate with the Transit Department to share visitor-related data for improved planning and advocate for increased weekend public transportation services and expanding service coverage to popular visitor areas. ^{15,16} ◆ Encourage the Transit Department to develop transportation plans and special routing to be implemented during larger conventions and events, creating connectivity between Downtown and other neighborhoods. To this end, Visit Albuquerque can share data and information with the Transit Department on bigger events and conventions for pre-planning. ◆ Continue working with Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner) and ABQ RIDE on supporting efforts to make the Alvarado Transportation Center visitor-friendly.	#Support	-	◆ ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department) ◆ City of Albuquerque Department of Arts & Culture ◆ Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)

¹⁵www.Abqrideforward.com

¹⁶Bellevue



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Shuttle Services and Connectors <ul style="list-style-type: none">Encourage the City of Albuquerque to proactively involve Visit Albuquerque and the tourism industry on their effort in researching shuttle services, such as the proposed expansion to the BioPark’s existing people mover, the proposed Cultural Tourism Connector as a complementary service to the existing people mover, and other future initiatives, to develop visitor-related routes and scheduling for popular attractions and seasons. An existing example of this includes The Clyde Hotel’s creation of a pilot shuttle program to connect hotel guests to the Sawmill district. Collaborating with the City as well as The Clyde Hotel will allow for sharing best practices to potentially expand and increase.	#Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)All Aboard AmericaRio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)The Clyde Hotel (Learning from Best Practices)
Ride-Sharing and Rental Cars <ul style="list-style-type: none">Activate partnerships with Uber/Lyft/Z-Trip to negotiate lower rates or provide a discount code during conventions and signature events in ABQ and its vicinity.Collaborate with ride-sharing platforms to address the shortage of Uber drivers in Albuquerque and encourage more drivers to join.Raise awareness of shared rental car services and rental car in targeted marketing campaigns as alternative options to get around ABQ.Implement a flexible, pilot-based approach with Z-trip to help Albuquerque recover from the pandemic transit and driver shortage. This strategy includes:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Launching short-term pilot programs that don't require long-term commitments, allowing Visit Albuquerque and the City to test and refine the Z-trip integration with minimal financial risk.Customizing the app for each convention or major event, allowing attendees to register for Z-trip when they sign up for conferences.Working with Z-Trip on including key tourism assets in the Z-Trip app for leisure and business visitors to be connected to more easily.Developing a dynamic "Discover ABQ" feature within the app for when major conventions and meetings are in Albuquerque, highlighting attractions and experiences.Collaborating with the airport to create a seamless arrival experience, including transportation options and immediate access to city information through the app.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Rental Car CompaniesShared Rental Car ServicesZ-trip, Uber and Lyft (ridesharing services)

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Bike Sharing <ul style="list-style-type: none">Reintroduce shared biking programs in collaboration with City leadership, Rail Trail planners, and local bike rental companies to promote biking as an alternative and sustainable option for visitors to access attractions in ABQ. Throughout the master planning process, feedback from stakeholders and the community demonstrated interest and openness in exploring shared biking programs in Albuquerque.Encourage hotels and accommodations to provide bike rental and storage options for visitors. This initiative could gain more momentum with the continuous development of Rail Trail.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ Rail Trail ProjectABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Bicycle rental companies (e.g., Zagster)Friends of Rail Trail



2. Collaborate with the City on Establishing a Neighborhood Circulator Shuttle System

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Advocate for and support the establishment of a neighborhood circulator shuttle system connecting different neighborhoods in ABQ, funded through public-private partnerships, with a fee attached to it, such as offering weekend passes and \$1 rides.	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Lodging and Hotel PartnersABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Private Transportation Partners and Shuttle Companies All Aboard AmericaThe Clyde Hotel (Learning from Best Practices)
Seek public and private partners through a Request for Information (RFI) process to collaborate on funding this initiative, potentially through a public-private partnership or sponsorship agreements.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Private Shuttle Companies
Offer weekend passes for the shuttle system, allowing residents, tourists and office workers to easily commute between neighborhoods.	#Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)
Focus initial pilot routes around Civic Plaza to facilitate access to Downtown amenities and promote vibrant community activities.	#Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)



3. Advocate for Upgrades to ABQ’s Tourism Infrastructure

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Explore partnerships with the New Mexico Tourism Department through the State Capital Outlay process to fund tourism infrastructure improvement projects.	#Advocate #Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Convention CenterAlbuquerque International SunportABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)City of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentNew Mexico Tourism Department
Encourage the City to develop special routing plans for signature events, coordinating with event organizers and transportation providers.	#Advocate #Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)Albuquerque International Balloon FiestaCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentEXPO New MexicoMetropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)

4. Improve Capture of Visitors to Santa Fe by Raising Awareness of Transit Options Available in ABQ

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Capture visitors to Santa Fe through targeted marketing that encourages them to add an overnight stay in Albuquerque, emphasizing transit options and potential itineraries.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque International SunportRio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)
Enhance connectivity between Albuquerque and Santa Fe by offering additional “express” Rail Runner trains or shuttle services, making it easier for visitors to explore both cities.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Rio Metro Regional Transit District (Rail Runner)



Workforce Development

Objective: Collaborate with City and educational partners in the broader region to develop, train and expand the hospitality and tourism workforce in Albuquerque by promoting the benefits and opportunities available in the hospitality industry, highlighting successful career paths and providing support for hospitality education and training.

Situational Analysis

In the post-pandemic landscape, destinations worldwide have faced increased challenges in developing and retaining a skilled workforce to support their hospitality industry. Albuquerque, as a prominent tourism destination, is not exempt from this trend.

Workforce and talent development, along with talent retention, emerged as one of the top three priority areas within the stakeholder survey in response to rating how to best allocate tourism resources. An overwhelming 75% of stakeholders rated it as very important or extremely important. This underscores the significance of investing in initiatives that enhance the hospitality industry's workforce and attract and retain skilled professionals.

Albuquerque has a favorable landscape to build a strong hospitality workforce, with existing opportunities and resources to be leveraged. The State government's provision of free in-state college education for qualified New Mexico residents presents an invaluable asset for training future professionals. Additionally, Albuquerque has the advantage of an established citywide program, called [Job Training ABQ](#), where training opportunities are provided for individuals seeking employment. During the development of this master plan, the City's Economic Development Department kicked off a hospitality module within the Job Training ABQ program to respond to industry needs. Since its start in 2024, the records indicated that this module has been increasingly popular among hospitality employees, showing promising potential for expansion.

The stakeholder survey indicates that developing a comprehensive hospitality education program for youth is vital. While official tourism education programs, such as a high school trade program, provide early exposure to the industry, the absence of hospitality-focused college degrees within Albuquerque highlights the potential for partnership with academic institutions. Visit Albuquerque can encourage the University of New Mexico and Central New Mexico Community College to develop a degree program in hospitality management or tourism, focusing on leadership skills. In addition, Visit Albuquerque can collaborate with the hospitality management program at New Mexico State University to attract students back to Albuquerque after graduation, creating a skilled talent pool that contributes to the city's economic growth.

To maximize the impact of these opportunities and meet the workforce demands of the hospitality industry, collaboration is crucial. Working together with the City of Albuquerque and educational partners across the region, Visit Albuquerque can support initiatives that promote the benefits and opportunities available in the hospitality sector. By prioritizing workforce development and talent retention, Albuquerque can nurture a resilient and skilled workforce that drives the success of its vibrant hospitality industry.



Recommendations

- 1. Collaborate with the City and Hospitality Industry Partners to Establish a Comprehensive and Standardized Workforce Development Pipeline

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work with the City's Economic Development Department to provide input and guidance in collaboration with Visit Albuquerque partners on enhancing the hospitality and tourism workforce training module in the Job Training ABQ program. As of September 2024, one of the first developed modules focuses on training individuals in the restaurant sector. Visit Albuquerque can contribute valuable insights to broaden the program's scope by identifying additional modules and tracks, such as event planning and hotel management. Providing input on the curriculum and expanding the program's offerings can help create a consistent and standardized process for equipping employees with the necessary skills to enter or transition within the industry seamlessly.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) - Hospitality and TourismCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentCNM Workforce Training CenterGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceGreater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA)IngenuityJob Corps AlbuquerqueNew Mexico Restaurant AssociationNew Mexico State University School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism ManagementNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentNew Mexico Workforce Connection - Hospitality SectorProgramsTalentABQ
Raise awareness of the newly developed hospitality modules within the Job Training ABQ program among Visit Albuquerque partners and industry stakeholders. By promoting the benefits and goals of the program, Visit Albuquerque can contribute to the overall program objective of getting every employer to engage at least one employee in this training initiative or recruit individuals from the program.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)City of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceGreater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA)New Mexico Restaurant AssociationNew Mexico Tourism Department

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
<p>Support partnerships with hospitality industry partners to develop a comprehensive and standardized pipeline that generates a pool through a shared resource platform within the city, allowing private sector employers to easily scale their workforce while providing hospitality workers with increased opportunities to secure more working hours. This initiative aligns with and can complement the efforts of organizations like Ski New Mexico, which is developing a workforce portal as of 2024 to connect seasonal workers in tourism and outdoor industries with employers, streamlining the hiring process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Work closely with private sector employers in Albuquerque to identify partners willing to participate in a pilot program.◆ Support defining specific job-related criteria that will serve as the basis of the program. Collaborate with industry leaders, employers and key stakeholders to align on essential skills, experience and preferences that will streamline the matching process between employers and workers.◆ Identify an appropriate partner organization, such as an economic development-related entity, to house and oversee the employment pool platform.◆ Establish the employment pool platform within the identified partner organization, and in collaboration with the City of Albuquerque, initially piloting the program within the city and surrounding areas of Albuquerque.◆ Evaluate the effectiveness of the pilot program while taking into account feedback from participating employers and workers.◆ Once the pilot program proves successful, scale the shared resource platform across the entire city.	#Support #Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce◆ Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department◆ Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce◆ Greater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA)◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association◆ Ski New Mexico

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
<p>Collaborate with transitional workforce organizations to establish a pilot training program focused on transitioning disengaged individuals into joining the hospitality workforce. This collaboration will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ Collaboration between Visit Albuquerque and the City's Economic Development Department to create comprehensive training modules that start with entry-level and back of the house positions. It is worth noting that as of 2024, the City of Albuquerque's Economic Development Department and its workforce division are working on a similar program focusing on youth aged 16-24 years old who are disengaged from their academic studies. This recommendation is aimed at complementing the current program by focusing on creating transitional work opportunities for members of the community who are disengaged from the workforce.◆ Engagement between the City and the hospitality employers on streamlining the background check process for employers for graduates of this program.◆ Raising awareness of federal incentives available to employers for hiring and employing individuals from certain targeted groups who have faced significant barriers to employment. These incentives include the Work Opportunity Tax Credit, Federal Bonding Program, and Growth Opportunities Grant Program.◆ Collaborate with industry associations like Greater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA) to connect program graduates with employment opportunities. and provide guidance to employers on the process of hiring individuals from the transitional workforce.^{17,18,19}	#Support #Advocate	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department◆ Greater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA)◆ New Mexico Hospitality Association◆ New Mexico Restaurant Association

¹⁷The City of Vancouver (Canada) partnered with local workforce development agencies to develop a program called "TourismWorks." This program provides short-term job placements, training and support to individuals facing employment barriers, facilitating their integration into the tourism industry.

¹⁸"Tourism Works" in Alberta (Canada) offers a comprehensive job placement service for individuals seeking transitional employment in the tourism sector. They provide individualized support from job searching and matching to interview preparation and post-placement support. was initiated as a collaborative effort between the Government of Alberta, Tourism HR Canada and industry stakeholders. The program aimed to address labor market challenges, enhance workforce development and promote employment opportunities within the tourism sector.

¹⁹<https://www.uschamber.com/workforce/employer-guide-to-second-chance-hiring-programs-and-tax-credits>



2. Leverage Albuquerque’s Unique Appeal as a Destination to Attract Skilled Individuals to the Tourism and Hospitality Workforce Pool

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with the City to synergize targeted promotional campaigns with positioning Albuquerque as a premier market for families and professionals in tech, healthcare and tourism sectors. Leverage the proximity to major metropolitan areas, support the City in joint marketing efforts, circulate marketing materials on relocation when meetings and conventions are occurring in the City to tap into a larger labor market.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of CommerceAlbuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) - Hospitality and Tourism ProgramsCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentCNM Workforce Training CenterGreater Albuquerque Chamber of CommerceGreater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association (GAHLA)Job Corps AlbuquerqueNew Mexico State University School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism ManagementTalentABQ
Showcase Albuquerque as a destination that promotes women's empowerment in the workforce and their overall well-being. ^{20,21}	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department
Support the enhancement of public perception and reputation of careers in the tourism and hospitality industry through targeted joint campaigns with the City and associations such as the Greater Albuquerque Hotels and Lodging Association (GAHLA) that highlight the diverse and rewarding nature of hospitality and tourism jobs.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) - Hospitality and Tourism ProgramsCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentCNM Workforce Training CenterNew Mexico Department of Workforce SolutionsNew Mexico Restaurant AssociationNew Mexico State University School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism ManagementNew Mexico Tourism DepartmentNew Mexico Workforce Connection - Hospitality Sector

²⁰[New Mexico ranks fourth in Gender Parity Index](#)
²¹[States With the Highest Percentage of Female Top Executives](#)



3. Establish a Robust Pipeline of Talent by Fostering Partnerships with the Local Academic Institutions

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Collaborate with the City of Albuquerque, Central New Mexico Community College and New Mexico State University to establish a joint apprenticeship program in the hospitality and tourism industry. This program will serve as an attractive incentive for hospitality and tourism students to return to Albuquerque after graduation.	#Co-Lead	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) - Hospitality and Tourism ProgramsCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentCNM Workforce Training CenterNew Mexico State University School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism ManagementUniversity of New Mexico
Develop comprehensive promotional initiatives to raise awareness of college hospitality offerings in Albuquerque. Collaborate with educational institutions and industry professionals to showcase the range of educational opportunities available, encouraging students to pursue a career in the hospitality and tourism field. ²²	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Central New Mexico Community College (CNM) - Hospitality and Tourism ProgramsCity of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentCNM Workforce Training CenterLocal Businesses and Organizations such as M'tucci's, IPCC, CRAVE and Dion'sLocal High SchoolsNew Mexico State. University School of Hotel, Restaurant and Tourism Management
Foster partnerships with local high schools and nonprofit organizations to support the development of a hospitality education program for youth. This initiative aims to spark an early interest in the hospitality and tourism industry as a viable career choice, providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to pursue successful futures in this dynamic field.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">City of Albuquerque Economic Development DepartmentLocal High Schools

²²M'tucci's, a renowned restaurant in Albuquerque, exemplifies best practices in workforce development and retention. Recognizing the importance of investing in their employees' growth, through comprehensive training programs and a strategic partnership with the College of New Mexico (CNM), the restaurant brings culinary students to gain hands-on experience in their establishment. This holistic approach to workforce development has yielded outstanding results, as M'tucci's boasts a remarkable 2x higher employee retention rate compared to the national average. By prioritizing employee training and fostering partnerships with educational institutions, M'tucci's has created an environment that supports employee growth, loyalty and long-term success within the organization.



Safety & Security

Objective: Act as an active participant and the voice of visitors to bring stakeholders together for a more robust advocacy presence of the tourism industry to prioritize safety.

Situational Analysis

Albuquerque faces safety and security challenges that impact the tourism experience in the city, reflecting a mixed landscape. According to the Tourism Readiness Index conducted for this project, Albuquerque ranks 10th out of 14 comparable destinations in terms of safety and security. Crime statistics reveal that Albuquerque has a 2.1x higher violent crime rate compared to the total competitive set average, ranking as the second highest after Little Rock. However, the city fares well in other aspects, ranking in the top 5 for LGBTQ+ wellbeing and second highest, along with Santa Fe, for women's wellbeing.

In the context of the local tourism industry, JLL interviewed Albuquerque law enforcement representatives, who acknowledge the strong connection between public safety and the success of tourism. While there has been some direct collaboration between law enforcement and the tourism sector in the past, such as the Connect Program and Downtown ECHO, engagement with law enforcement officials throughout this process demonstrated their willingness in forging a partnership to address safety concerns.

To address safety concerns, the city has implemented initiatives such as the "APD Connect" program, which provides access to safety cameras, primarily focused on hotels and acts as a business "crime-watch," allowing stakeholders to communicate about criminal activity in real time. Additionally, law enforcement is currently implementing measures to enhance public safety in key areas like Old Town. They are actively seeking feedback from tourism stakeholders to identify specific locations or situations where law enforcement presence or intervention would be beneficial. The efforts of law enforcement, including increased patrols in the Downtown area, have resulted in a notable decrease in crime rates, with a 20%-30% reduction from 2023.

Regarding transit safety, law enforcement is preparing to launch a major campaign focused on bus safety. In addition to this campaign, the Albuquerque Police Department has assigned Transit Safety Officers and Police Service Aides (PSAs) to buses and stops to ensure the safety and security of both local residents and tourists.²³

In summary, while Albuquerque faces safety and security challenges, efforts are underway to address these concerns and create a safer environment for both residents and tourists. Collaborative initiatives between law enforcement and the tourism industry are being explored, particularly in popular visitor areas as well as during signature events. Community involvement and feedback play a vital role in identifying areas where law enforcement presence is needed. Notably, the city has seen a reduction in crime rates and is actively implementing programs to enhance public safety, such as increased patrols and a focus on transit safety. Going forward, actively engaging the tourism industry and fostering partnerships can help support law enforcement to create a positive and secure tourism experience for visitors and residents alike.

²³<https://www.cabq.gov/transit/rider-resources/bus-safety-rules>



Recommendations

1. Partner with Albuquerque Entities to Advocate for Comprehensive Safety Solutions

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Represent ABQ's tourism industry at regular meetings with local government officials, law enforcement agencies, community organizations and residents to discuss safety concerns and develop proactive solutions. This will involve advocating for initiatives, sharing visitor feedback and emphasizing the importance of promoting safe environments for signature ABQ events as a broader strategy. This could include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">Involving law enforcement in the event development and planning process, especially for top 10 most popular events, to promote safety and security.Sharing a list of all events with details and dates in ABQ for law enforcement to keep track of.Advocate for the development of a tourism and hospitality task force within organizations charged with the safety and security of Albuquerque, such as APD.	#Advocate #Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS)Albuquerque Neighborhood Watch ProgramAlbuquerque Office of Emergency ManagementAlbuquerque Police Department (APD)Bernalillo County Sheriff's Office (BCSO)
Collaborate with City agencies, such as the Transportation Department and law enforcement, to support the Bus Safety campaign . Collaboration would involve sharing visitor data on their experience with public transit and advocating for the increased presence of Transit Safety Officers to address safety concerns and provide helpful information to visitors, especially during major events and citywide activities.	#Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Community Safety Department (ACS)Albuquerque Office of Emergency ManagementAlbuquerque Police Department (APD)ABQ RIDE (City of Albuquerque Transit Department)



Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Share data and input on safety concerns and collaborate with relevant agencies to address them in Downtown areas. One key area includes working with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency and law enforcement groups to address issues like unlit or dimly lit areas at night and working with partners to increase the overall sense of safety in the evenings and attract more visitors to Downtown.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Neighborhood Watch ProgramAlbuquerque Police Department (APD)Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Advocate for increased police presence in high-crime and visitor-facing areas by sharing resident and visitor sentiment data with relevant agencies. This would help ensure that law enforcement resources are allocated appropriately to address safety concerns in areas frequented by tourists.	#Advocate #Support	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Police Department (APD)
Raise awareness of a menu of safety measures that can be incorporated for big gatherings; examples include police presence on horseback or bicycles, and updated safety procedures in the Albuquerque Convention Center and other venues, ensuring a comprehensive approach to safety during major events while not overemphasizing the need for the increased presence. Create a guide for requesting support from APD for events. ²⁴	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)Albuquerque International Balloon FiestaAlbuquerque Police Department (APD)Entertainment PromotersEvent OrganizersEXPO New MexicoSports Organizers

²⁴<https://www.cabq.gov/police/crime-prevention-safety>



Venues & Facilities

Objective: Take a central role in advocating for new, expanded and upgraded visitor-facing venues, amenities and facilities in Albuquerque.

Situational Analysis

Through conducting an in-depth study of existing venues and visitor trends, the Destination Master Plan engagement process identified several options that could enhance Albuquerque’s competitive position and attract more visitors.

One recommendation involves investigating the development of a Downtown headquarter hotel, which would provide additional walkable accommodations and amenities to support major conventions and enhance Albuquerque’s competitiveness for citywide business. A comprehensive analysis of the Convention Center space use, lost business, supporting infrastructure and Visit Albuquerque sales data was conducted to evaluate future opportunities. The Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) is currently underutilized, with an occupancy rate of approximately 30% during fully operational years (2019 and 2023). The Center’s square footage is considered to be oversized for the walkable hotel package, as evidenced by the significant amount of lost business due to hotel-related reasons, mainly the limited number of hotel rooms within walking distance. More specifically, more than 100,000 room nights were lost per year due to hotel-related concerns. This suggests that while the Convention Center has ample space, the surrounding hotel infrastructure does not adequately support larger events, indicating a mismatch between the Center’s capacity and the available nearby accommodations. With three hotels totaling 784 rooms within a quarter mile, Albuquerque falls significantly short of the competitive average.

Another consideration is improvements to the existing Convention Center, upgrading its facilities and technology to meet the evolving needs of event organizers and attendees. Collaboration with the Convention Center team and multiple site inspections highlighted the need to review core capital improvement needs at the Center. This collaboration also reinforced the importance of delivering a competitive attendee experience, emphasizing walkability and the perception of a safe environment.

Another key option explores the feasibility of increasing sports and entertainment capacity through a versatile multiuse venue that could host a wide range of events, from concerts and sports competitions to exhibitions and community gatherings. These potential projects aim to diversify tourism offerings and position Albuquerque as a premier choice for both leisure and business travelers. Notably, expanding indoor sports capacity was specifically identified as having significant local tournament demand. This multiuse venue could address a clear market need and attract a steady stream of sports-related events and visitors to the area. These combined approaches would position Albuquerque as a more attractive destination for various events, driving economic growth and community engagement.

Also, Albuquerque faces some unique challenges when it comes to development. For example, the city’s development permitting and entitlement processes tend to be time-consuming, even compared to neighboring states such as Texas and Colorado. The Destination Master Plan engagement process showed the industry stakeholders’ appetite in advocating for a development environment that is both welcoming and easy to navigate, offering incentives to encourage investment and development. In Albuquerque, public-private partnerships (P3) are the preferred avenue for agreements. Leveraging funds available through the Local Economic Development Act (LEDA), which promotes cooperation between the private and public sectors, can potentially aid in development.

An important final consideration is the strategic positioning of Visit Albuquerque in supporting future venue development. By leveraging its resources and expertise, Visit Albuquerque can play a crucial role in promoting and facilitating these projects, ensuring alignment with citywide goals and enhancing Albuquerque’s appeal as a premier event destination. By addressing identified gaps in the city’s offerings, Albuquerque can enhance its competitive position and fully leverage its existing assets, ultimately strengthening its standing as a desirable location for various events and tourism activities.



Albuquerque Convention Center

As part of the ongoing strategic plan for the Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC), it is recommended to continue evaluating the Center's performance using the optimization tool utilized during this process. This tool should be used to measure and report performance on an annual basis. By doing so, stakeholders can track progress toward the established goals, including increased occupancy rates, improved booking of high-priority events (P1 and P2), and overall economic impact.

Regular evaluation will allow for timely adjustments to booking guidelines, sales strategies and key performance indicators (KPIs) as needed. It is crucial to continue reinvestment and ongoing updates to the Convention Center that align with meeting planner preferences, ensuring the facility remains competitive and attractive to potential clients.

Currently, the Albuquerque Convention Center requires significant maintenance and ongoing investment to maintain its competitiveness. Investment in the aesthetics of the East building is necessary to enhance the overall appeal of the facility. Further development should look to capitalize on the view of the Sandia Mountains which could be transformative by creating a iconic feature in the Center and dramatically increasing performance.

This comprehensive approach, including addressing these maintenance and upgrade needs, will ensure that the ACC remains on track with its multi-year path to achieve optimal utilization and economic benefit for the region. By focusing on both operational strategies and facility improvements, the Convention Center can better position to meet the evolving demands of the events industry and maximize its potential as a key economic driver for Albuquerque.



Recommendations

1. Implement Annual Evaluations Using the Established Optimization Tool, Continually Adjust Strategies Based on Results, and Maintain Facility Updates Aligned with Industry.

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Regularly collect and analyze data using the optimization tool and use insights to inform sales strategies and booking priorities.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) ◆ Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce ◆ Momentus Technologies
Stay updated on industry trends and meeting planner preferences and advocate for regular upgrades and reinvestment in the Convention Center.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)
Develop a comprehensive marketing strategy that prioritizes events based on optimization tool insights.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)
Continue utilizing meeting planner survey as a feedback loop with event organizers and attendees to gather qualitative data on ACC performance and areas for improvement.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)
Create a long-term facility improvement plan that aligns with projected industry needs and technological advancements.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) ◆ City of Albuquerque
Support the Convention Center's data integration plan with the Momentus Technologies transition and focus on seamless information flow between marketing efforts, booking processes and post-event analysis. Implement training programs for staff to ensure full utilization of the integrated system's capabilities. Continue review meetings between Visit Albuquerque and Convention Center teams to refine the data alignment process and address emerging challenges based on collective optimization goals. Leverage the integrated approach to improve operational efficiency and provide data-driven strategies for attracting and managing events in Albuquerque.	#Support	-	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC) ◆ Momentus Technologies

Convention Center – Headquarter Hotel

Based on comprehensive analysis of Albuquerque's lodging and convention landscape, this strategic plan reaffirms a critical opportunity to enhance the city's position in the competitive convention market. While similar recommendations have been made in the past, findings from the Destination Master Plan study present a compelling case to revisit and potentially implement previously proposed recommendations. Incorporating the latest data and market trends, we strongly urge the City of Albuquerque to initiate a thorough feasibility study and site selection process for a new headquarter hotel. A headquarter hotel for a convention center is a large, full-service hotel that is typically located adjacent to or very near a convention center. It serves as the primary accommodation and event space for major conferences, trade shows and other large gatherings.

The proposed hotel development should aim for a minimum capacity of 500 rooms. This addition would be transformative, increasing Albuquerque's capacity for citywide events by pushing the total available peak convention rooms beyond the 1,000 mark. Such an expansion is crucial for attracting larger conventions and events, potentially elevating Albuquerque's status in the national convention landscape. Despite previous considerations, this project should be prioritized as a short-term goal to capitalize on potential economic benefits.

While initial market research has identified a lack of hotel inventory to support Albuquerque's convention ambitions, an in-depth feasibility study remains a critical next step. This comprehensive analysis goes beyond simply confirming the need for additional rooms; it delves into the financial viability of the project, explores site-specific factors, and assesses the broader economic impact on the community. The study will evaluate potential locations, considering land costs, zoning regulations and infrastructure requirements. It will also examine various funding options, including public-private partnerships, which are essential for project implementation. Furthermore, the feasibility study will provide a deeper understanding of how a new headquarter hotel would fit into the existing competitive landscape and identify potential risks and challenges. By addressing these crucial aspects, the study not only validates the market demand but also creates a detailed roadmap for successful implementation. This thorough approach is instrumental in gaining buy-in from stakeholders ranging from city officials and investors to the local community, ensuring that Albuquerque's investment in its hospitality infrastructure is both strategic and sustainable.

Recommendations

- 1. Initiate a Comprehensive Feasibility Study and Site Selection Process for a New 500+ Room Headquarter Hotel, Which Would Increase the City's Capacity for Larger Events and Drive Economic Growth, While Ensuring Thorough Economic Impact Assessments and Community Engagement Throughout the Process

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Work closely with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) to create and publish a Request for Information (RFI) for a new headquarter hotel.	#Support	-	◆ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Pursue a public-private partnership (P3) approach for the development of the proposed headquarter hotel.	#Support	-	◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department
Develop and issue a comprehensive RFI to assess private sector interest and gather innovative ideas for the headquarter hotel project, informing the city's approach and feasibility study.	#Support	-	◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department
Implement a robust tracking system to demonstrate the value of the expanded convention capacity to the local community and decision-makers.	#Support	-	◆ Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)

Expanding Indoor Sports Tournament and Entertainment Capacity

During the Destination Master Planning process and discussions with the Steering Committee, the idea of a multiuse venue in Albuquerque was proposed for maximizing space utilization, revenue, growth and overall economic impact. This potential venue would not only be highly competitive for sporting events but also attract entertainment and other social events, resulting in both fiscal performance and vibrancy. JLL advocates for a multiuse flexible facility over a traditional sports-only or entertainment-only models due to the venue’s ability to create a unique environment year-round. It is recommended to engage in conversations with sports organizers, corporate meeting planners and entertainment promoters to understand their specific facility requirements.

It is worth noting that throughout the engagement process, several viable areas for the potential development of a multiuse complex were surfaced that need further vetting and analysis. Downtown Albuquerque was mentioned repeatedly in the master planning process as the location having the highest potential for the development of a complex and adding demand generation to the area. Additionally, the University of New Mexico owns vacant land in advantageous locations, in close proximity to the university, UNM Hospital and existing sports complexes. One intersection that stands out is at South Campus, separate from the main campus, located near University Boulevard and Avenida Caesar Chavez. This intersection boasts some of the largest sports complexes in New Mexico, catering to football, basketball and baseball. However, crucial amenities such as restaurants and hotels are notably absent. Additional investment in these types of amenities within close proximity will be important for both event and sports organizers. To overcome these challenges, data sharing between tourism and developers is vital to align interests and drive development effectively.

Visit Albuquerque has the opportunity to support the Multiuse Complex study and advocate for necessary upgrades to existing complexes. Additionally, a plan should be developed to identify potential opportunities and attract investment for new facility development. Both public and private investments can be attracted to sports complexes, as they can generate profits through a mix of local and out-of-town usage. The menu of potential funding options specific to Albuquerque are further explored in the Funding Section of the plan.



Recommendation

- 1. Conduct a Feasibility, Market Demand and Site Selection Study for Development of a Multiuse Complex

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Engage consultants to conduct a comprehensive feasibility study, market demand analysis and site selection process for a potential multiuse complex, ensuring optimal location and market viability.	#Co-Lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department ◆ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Conduct extensive interviews with sports organizers, corporate meeting planners and entertainment promoters to gather detailed facility requirements.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ Entertainment Partners ◆ Events Partners ◆ Sports Partners
Engage with local community groups to ensure the proposed facility aligns with neighborhood needs and addresses potential concerns.	#Support	-	◆ City of Albuquerque
Explore potential public-private partnership models for funding and operating the multiuse complex.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department ◆ Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
Develop a comprehensive transportation and infrastructure plan to support the proposed facility.	#Support	-	-
Create and publish a Request for Information (RFI) for potential venue.	#Co-lead	Visit Albuquerque	◆ City of Albuquerque



Milestones

- Validate participation and invite sports leaders, entertainment promoters and corporate planners to engage in the study with focus on a multiuse venue development. Develop a regular meeting approach.
- Identify viable funding options for the multiuse venue, including exploring Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models for development, management and operation, as well as considering local options sales tax and district funding.
- Develop an approach with key partners to create a Request for Information (RFI) highlighting specific site opportunities to attract potential investors for multiuse complex development supporting anticipated tournaments.
- Conduct further studies and analysis to finalize the structure and define the relationship between Visit Albuquerque and the proposed multiuse venue.
- Develop a comprehensive pro forma and perform a high-level cost estimation to determine the optimal business model, staffing requirements, marketing, sales and projected operational performance.
- Collaborate with architects to create conceptual renderings, validate the venue design and ensure it meets the needs of all user groups.
- Explore and implement agreements advantageous to Visit Albuquerque’s role in attracting tournaments for the complexes, including exploring partnerships and collaborations with sports organizations and venues.

Key Partners

- City of Albuquerque
- Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)



Additional Sports Venue Development Considerations

Albuquerque has experienced overall success in the sports market, attracting various tournaments and events. However, there is untapped potential to further enhance sports tourism in the city. This can be achieved by upgrading the current facilities and developing new facilities that cater to the diverse needs of hosting a wider range of tournaments.

The City has been actively expanding its sports infrastructure, with a focus on diverse facilities. Recent developments include the construction of a cricket field and significant additions to pickleball courts. In May 2024, the City completed 15 new pickleball courts, bringing the total number to 33. Plans are in place to further expand this popular amenity, with six additional courts slated for construction. Once completed, this expansion will increase the total number of pickleball courts to 39, reflecting the City's commitment to meeting the growing demand for recreational facilities. Additionally, there is no permanent home for indoor track in Albuquerque, and the Convention Center serves as a temporary indoor track facility utilizing the exhibit hall space, for the University of New Mexico indoor track meets and additional track meets. Creating a multiuse facility could help address this issue and provide a dedicated space for indoor track and field events.

Below is a partial list of publicly funded sports facilities and venues in Albuquerque:

- 1. **Balloon Fiesta Park** (hosting various outdoor sports events, new cricket pitches and the annual Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta)
- 2. **Isotopes Park** (home of the Albuquerque Isotopes minor league baseball team and the NM United currently)
- 3. **Albuquerque Convention Center** (versatile space for indoor events, ranging from volleyball and weightlifting to indoor track and field)
- 4. **University Arena** (The Pit, home to the University of New Mexico basketball teams)

- 5. **Tingley Coliseum** (part of the EXPO New Mexico complex, used for various sports events)
- 6. **Rio Rancho Events Center** (located in nearby Rio Rancho, hosting various sports events and concerts)
- 7. **University Stadium** (outdoor football stadium that is the home field of the UNM Lobos)
- 8. **West Mesa Aquatic Center** (Olympic-sized swimming pool and separate recreation pool)
- 9. **Duke City BMX** (the largest covered BMX facility in the country)
- 10. **Jennifer Riordan Spark Kindness Regional Sports Complex** (featuring five collegiate-level baseball fields and team facilities)
- 11. **New Mexico Soccer Tournament Complex** (22 grass fields located in nearby Bernalillo)
- 12. **Mesa del Sol Sports Complex** (6 grass fields and 4 turf fields)
- 13. **Manzano Mesa Pickleball Facility** (33 lighted courts)
- 14. **Lobo Field** (baseball stadium on the University of New Mexico campus)
- 15. **Jerry Cline Tennis Facility** (18 courts)
- 16. **Los Altos Softball facility** (5 grass fields)

An integral part of the Albuquerque Destination Master Plan is to advocate and support plans for future venue development. The plan recognizes the importance of ongoing projects that require advocacy, input and support from local stakeholders, including Visit Albuquerque. Additionally, the plan emphasizes the importance of elevating Visit Albuquerque's profile to enhance the city's visibility and appeal. This strategy involves leveraging the expertise and influence of local sports leaders to actively advocate for future development initiatives. By doing so, Albuquerque aims to increase its potential to secure major events, ultimately raising the city's profile as a premier destination for sports and entertainment.



Five sports venue development projects are in various stages of development or expansion, and these facilities may have the potential to increase the region’s competitiveness and bring more tournaments to Albuquerque. These projects could require additional advocacy, input, and support to ensure the community’s diverse needs are met.

North Domingo Baca Aquatics Center: The North Domingo Baca Aquatics Center is currently under development in North Domingo Baca Park, Albuquerque. This project aims to enhance the aquatic facilities in the area, featuring both indoor and outdoor pools. The center is designed to provide year-round swimming opportunities for the community, catering to various aquatic activities and programs. Work has begun on the next phase of the Aquatic Center to build essential infrastructure including the pump room, access road and utilities. This phase is expected to be completed in September 2025. The full project will feature Olympic-sized and recreational pools. Simultaneously, all six tennis courts at the park are being resurfaced for the first time since their construction in 2014. These improvements demonstrate ongoing development of recreational facilities in the area.

Mesa Del Sol Regional Outdoor Sports Complex expansion: The Mesa Del Sol Regional Outdoor Sports Complex is undergoing an expansion that will increase the facility's capacity, allowing for larger tournaments and the ability to host more tournaments simultaneously. The development addresses a growing demand for outdoor sports facilities in the area. The expansion aims to accommodate more sports activities, enhancing the complex's capabilities to host various sporting events. Notably, with the recent addition of four turf fields, New Mexico Youth Soccer has been able to add three elite travel leagues to their 2024-2025 schedule, demonstrating the immediate impact of these improvements on local sports programming.

NM United Stadium: The New Mexico United Soccer Stadium project, currently being considered near Balloon Fiesta Park, has made significant progress, recently gaining approval from the Environmental Planning Commission. This project proposes the construction of a soccer-specific stadium with a seating capacity of 8,000 to 10,000 spectators. This represents a substantial investment in the city, signaling a commitment to the sport's growth and potential economic benefits. This development would provide a dedicated home for the New Mexico United soccer team. The location near Balloon Fiesta Park suggests potential synergies with other major events in the area. As this project moves forward, it not only promises to elevate the soccer and multiuse entertainment experience, but also stands as a symbol of Albuquerque's growth, ambition and dedication to creating spaces that bring people together.



Westside Indoor Sports Facility: The Westside Indoor Sports Facility project is gaining momentum in Albuquerque. This potential development addresses the need for year-round sports venues on the city's Westside. While specific details about the facility's features have not been finalized, indoor sports complexes typically offer space for multiple sports and activities protected from weather conditions. The project's progress indicates the city's commitment to expanding its sports infrastructure to serve the community better.

ABQ Basketball Club: The potential development of the ABQ Basketball Club project involves the creative repurposing of a former Albuquerque movie theater into a basketball facility. This adaptive reuse project demonstrates innovative approaches to urban development and sports infrastructure. The conversion of a cinema into a basketball venue likely includes significant interior renovations to accommodate courts, training areas and other basketball-related amenities. This project is currently under consideration by relevant stakeholders within the city.

Additionally, it will be important to consider conducting a full assessment and analysis of sports tourism to determine the correct next steps in investment. This comprehensive approach would provide valuable insights into the potential economic impact and guide strategic decisions for future facility developments.



Other Venue Recommendations and Strategies

Strategies	Visit Albuquerque Role	Lead	Partners
Launch a comprehensive advocacy campaign positioning Albuquerque as a critical driver of New Mexico's economy and cultural landscape, positioning Albuquerque as New Mexico's premier destination to meet, work, live and play, and as the state's primary hub for meetings, sporting events, business gatherings and global demand generator events.	#Advocate	-	<div><div></div>Albuquerque Convention Center (ACC)</div> <div><div></div>City of Albuquerque</div> <div><div></div>Greater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association</div>
Continue to implement a strategic distribution plan for Visit Albuquerque's master list of event venues. Explore a variety of user-friendly digital platforms categorizing venues by size, type and amenities. Target national and international event planning associations, sports leagues, concert promoters and corporate event planners with tailored marketing efforts. Conduct regular updates of the venue list and maintain consistent follow-up communications with potential clients. Proactively organize familiarization tours for key decision-makers in the events industry to provide firsthand experience of Albuquerque's offerings.	#Lead	Visit Albuquerque	<div><div></div>Event Organizers</div> <div><div></div>Event Venues</div>
Work with State to further activate EXPO New Mexico to enhance the impact of this facility on the neighboring areas and the community.	#Support #Advocate	-	<div><div></div>City of Albuquerque</div> <div><div></div>EXPO New Mexico</div> <div><div></div>State of New Mexico</div>
Support continued parking development throughout the city and Downtown. Lack of adequate parking and catering facilities hinders the ability to host multiple events simultaneously. Moreover, the Pit, University Stadium and Isotopes Park share parking lots, elevating the parking issue in that area.	# Support #Advocate	-	<div><div></div>City of Albuquerque</div> <div><div></div>UNM</div>
Partner with the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA) to develop a comprehensive outdoor venue shading initiative. Conduct an assessment of existing outdoor spaces to identify priority areas for improvement. Design innovative, sustainable shading solutions that incorporate aesthetic appeal and potentially integrate solar technology. Implement pilot projects in high-traffic areas to demonstrate benefits and gather public feedback. Align this initiative with broader urban development and sustainability goals to attract additional funding through grants or private sector partnerships.	#Support	-	<div><div></div>Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)</div>

Other Key Partners for Venue and Facility Development

- City of Albuquerque Economic Development Department
- New Mexico State Legislature representatives from Albuquerque
- Albuquerque Regional Economic Alliance (AREA)
- Sports Partners (Includes sports organizers, private operators and developers as funding partners)
- Events Partners (Includes event organizers, meeting planners, corporate partners, funding partners)
- Entertainment Partners (Includes booking agents, promoters, ticketing providers, catering, event production companies, security, sponsorship partners)
- Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
- Albuquerque Hispano Chamber of Commerce
- New Mexico Tourism Department
- University of New Mexico
- Central New Mexico Community College
- Albuquerque Convention Center
- Local hotels and resorts
- New Mexico Hospitality Association
- Major venues (e.g., Isotopes Park, The Pit, EXPO New Mexico)
- New Mexico State Fair Commission
- Bernalillo County Commission
- Albuquerque Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA)
- City of Albuquerque Parks and Recreation Department
- Momentus Technologies (software provider)
- Indian Pueblo Cultural Center
- National Hispanic Cultural Center
- Albuquerque International Balloon Fiesta organizers
- Local sports teams (New Mexico United, Albuquerque Isotopes, Duke City Gladiators, New Mexico Ice Wolves, New Mexico Bullsnares, etc.)
- Film and television production companies operating in Albuquerque

Funding

In New Mexico, there is a provision stating that for a Class A city like Albuquerque at least 50% of the lodgers’ tax revenue generated from lodging accommodations must be used for marketing and advertising of the destination, with the remainder of the revenue having the possibility to be used for debt obligations, administrative costs, and other purposes that the City deems appropriate. This provision offers an opportunity to strategically utilize the funds for tourism development, infrastructure improvements and hotel development in the city.

To maximize the impact of this revenue, it is recommended to explore avenues for attracting additional investments and/or avenues for debt retirement from the state government and advocate for increased funding specifically dedicated to urban areas like Albuquerque. This funding could be directed toward tourism development, infrastructure enhancements and paying off existing debts related to tourism-related projects. Emphasizing the need for investment in areas such as infrastructure and hotel development would align with the intent of the lodgers’ tax revenue and contribute to the long-term growth and success of Albuquerque's tourism industry. Prioritizing investments in infrastructure, hotel development and other tangible projects would create a lasting impact on the tourism landscape of Albuquerque. The strategy of attracting state funding and aligning it with the lodgers’ tax revenue can provide the necessary resources to support the city’s tourism objectives, bolster the local economy and enhance the overall visitor experience in Albuquerque.

The DMP recommends that the industry constantly consider new and different means of expanding funding. Trends across the U.S. demonstrate that destinations are seeking new and creative ways to diversify funding to support the industry. Additionally, across the industry, funds are being raised to impact tourism on areas beyond marketing, such as sustainable management of tourism, industry advocacy, capital and catalyst projects, workforce development and integrating innovation.

While Visit Albuquerque does not have a capital budget, this is something that the industry should encourage with the relevant departments to ensure resource reinvestment is being made to support the industry, including venues, Downtown redevelopment, new tourism products and attractions, among others.

The DMP also recommends developing an industry-wide communication plan to speak about the importance of tourism to the overall economy. Such organizations like Destinations International have in-depth research or lexicons indicating current terms which relate to today's decision makers. Connecting the industry's importance and relevancy is key to continue to maintain and grow funding.

Examples of additional funding mechanisms that can be utilized by Visit Albuquerque and the City of Albuquerque to support upcoming tourism, Downtown and infrastructure development projects include:

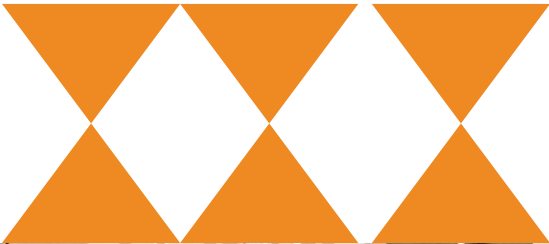
- **Establish a Tax Increment Financing (TIF) district:** Support and advocate for the City administration’s proposal to create a designated TIF district in downtown Albuquerque to capture a portion of the tax revenue generated from increased property values within the district. A TIF is a public financing tool that aims to stimulate economic development and redevelopment within a designated area. In the context of tourism, a TIF can be utilized to support and fund projects that promote tourism growth. This can include the development of new tourism attractions, the improvement of existing infrastructure or the enhancement of tourism-related services. With the significance of Downtown redevelopment for Albuquerque, these funds can be primarily focused on redevelopment projects, infrastructure improvements, and tourism initiatives in the Downtown area. While the TIF will be property-tax based, a new state law will also allow up to 75% of the increment of growth of city, county and state gross receipts tax to be reinvested in the area over that period. This could produce roughly \$200 million. The TIF method is also commonly used to improve downtowns in other cities, including Colorado Springs, Tucson and Denver, which all spend upwards of \$60 million a year through tax increment financing.
- **Support the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) in Downtown:** Create a Downtown BID to levy an additional assessment or fee on commercial properties within the district. Allocate the generated funds toward enhancing Downtown cleanliness, safety, marketing and infrastructure improvements to boost tourism appeal. As there is an ordinance in Albuquerque that allows for this to take place, and business owners and property owners can petition the city to do a study and create a Business Improvement District, and then assess a fee across those property owners that that group of property owners then can use in their own interest to promote their businesses. As of September 2024, city and business leaders in Albuquerque have proposed a Downtown BID to boost commercial efforts.
- **Debt retirement approach:** Work with the New Mexico Finance Authority to explore potential debt relief options for Albuquerque's Lodgers' Tax debt to free up resources for investment in catalytic projects. Position Albuquerque as the most important metropolitan area in New Mexico, with Albuquerque’s Downtown being New Mexico’s Downtown, and Albuquerque’s Convention Center being New Mexico’s Convention Center.
- **Issue municipal bonds:** Utilize bond financing to raise funds for critical infrastructure projects, such as streetscape improvements, outdoor shading for Civic Plaza, a headquarter hotel, public transportation enhancements, and parking facilities in downtown Albuquerque. The current allocation of 50% of lodgers’ tax toward bonds can attract state investment for infrastructure and hotel development in the tourism sector.
- **Seek Local Economic Development Act (LEDA) funding:** To support Downtown revitalization efforts, attract new businesses and stimulate tourism-related developments, it is recommended that businesses apply for funding through the LEDA program offered by the State of New Mexico Economic Development Department. LEDA is a program administered by the New Mexico Economic Development Department to support economic development initiatives and job creation in the state.



- **NM State Capital Outlay funds:** New Mexico State Capital Outlay funds are allocated by the state government to finance public infrastructure projects and major purchases. These funds support the construction, renovation and improvement of facilities, as well as the acquisition of equipment and technology. Proposed projects undergo evaluation and prioritization before being approved and funded through the state's budgeting and appropriations process. Once allocated, the funds are disbursed to responsible entities for project implementation. State Capital Outlay funds are instrumental in investing in public infrastructure, promoting economic development and addressing critical needs throughout the state.
- **Encourage Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for development projects:** Foster collaborations between the public sector and private investors/developers to jointly finance and execute revitalization projects in downtown Albuquerque. This can include mixed-use developments, hotel construction, cultural or entertainment venues, and public spaces. The PPP approach has historically been successful in upgrading assets and attractions in downtown districts across the U.S., with Tucson, Arizona, serving as a prime example of utilizing these partnerships to revitalize its downtown.
- **Promote utilization of tax credits:** Raise awareness and provide support to property owners and developers seeking to utilize available federal and state historic preservation tax credits for renovating historic buildings and repurposing them for tourism-related purposes, such as boutique hotels, art galleries or museums.
- **Offer tourism-related tax incentives:** Explore the possibility of introducing tax incentives or exemptions specifically targeting tourism-focused businesses, such as hotels, restaurants, entertainment venues and tourism service providers. These incentives can help attract new investments and stimulate growth in Downtown Albuquerque.
- **Identify and apply for grants:** Research and pursue grants offered by federal, state and local entities that support Downtown revitalization, historic preservation and tourism-related projects. These grants could provide financial assistance for various initiatives, including streetscape enhancements, cultural programming or small business support.

In collaboration with private and public entities, such as the Metropolitan Redevelopment Agency (MRA), the abovementioned funding mechanisms can be pursued to support various areas identified in the master plan for managing and sustainably increasing tourism over the next 10 years:

- Development of a headquarter hotel with 500+ rooms.
- Development of multiuse venue and complex for entertainment and sports.
- Development of iconic attractions.
- Infrastructure upgrades such as increasing street lighting in the city in areas such as the Downtown area, upgrading and aligning the signage across the city, and working on maintaining the roads and streets in prime condition.
- Facility and venue upgrades and regular maintenance.
- Downtown vitalization and beautification projects, utilizing string lights, murals and public arts projects.
- Development of tailored incentives for retail and restaurant development in the Downtown area.
- Development and maintenance of bike trails.
- Improved connectivity throughout Albuquerque's neighborhoods.



Measurement & Reporting

In addition to positioning its departments, allocating resources and planning for future funding, Visit Albuquerque’s success in achieving the objectives outlined in the Destination Master Plan will depend on effective measurement and reporting for stakeholders. While traditional industry reporting focuses on macro-economic figures such as total visitors and overall economic impact, for the DMP, it is crucial to tie success more closely to the actions taken as a result of Visit Albuquerque’s own activities as a lead organization and as a partner in implementation. To facilitate this, it is recommended that Visit Albuquerque incorporate the following areas into its business plan and reporting processes:



Effective reporting for Visit Albuquerque should be categorized into three key areas. First, monitoring industry performance metrics will provide insight into the overall health and trends within the tourism sector. This can include tracking data on total visitors, economic impact and other macro-level indicators that highlight the region's tourism landscape.

Second, Visit Albuquerque should focus on tracking how its programming and initiatives influence outcomes, specifically measuring the impact of its activities. This can involve assessing key performance indicators (KPIs) directly tied to Visit Albuquerque’s efforts, such as target audience engagement or website traffic . By monitoring these metrics, Visit Albuquerque can gain insights into the success and effectiveness of its specific initiatives.

Lastly, measuring the direct results of Visit Albuquerque’s work is paramount. This involves gauging the specific actions and outcomes that are driven as a result of the organization's efforts. This can include assessing the number of room nights booked by Visit Albuquerque, conversion rates, the effectiveness of marketing campaigns or any other tangible outcomes attributed to Visit Albuquerque’s active involvement.

The benefit of this approach is it does not create the implication that Visit Albuquerque is solely responsible for the larger destination trends. It opens up a consistent opportunity to report on specific Visit Albuquerque initiatives and how they have performed.

Examples of DMO Key Performance Indicators

Samples of these metrics in each category are below:

Monitor

- **Visitation statistics** - frequency: annual
- **Visitor impact** - frequency: annual
- **Lodging tax and ATMD assessment revenue** - frequency: annual
- **Lodging performance** - frequency: monthly

Program & Influence

- **Website traffic** - frequency: monthly
- **Social media engagement** - frequency: monthly
- **Travel media mentions/coverage** - frequency: quarterly

Drive

- **Return on marketing investment**
 - Proportion of target audience exposed to the marketing and influenced to visit the destination
- **Meetings, Conventions & Sports room nights booked by Visit Albuquerque**
- **Meetings, Conventions & Sports sales conversion rates**
 - Percentage of leads converted to bookings



Examples of Destination Master Plan Success Measures

The following are **examples of potential measures**. for Visit Albuquerque to monitor and develop a more comprehensive story of Visit Albuquerque’s impact.

- Policy and advocacy results
- Event organizers supported and associated trends with respective events
- Event Impact Calculator outcomes
- Products supported/invested in
- Tourism-related businesses supported
- Multiuse-venue development progress report
- Sports venues upgrades and maintenance report
- Advancements in developing a new headquarter hotel (milestones achieved)
- Assets development support
- Collaborations and new initiatives with Indigenous tribes
 - Impact on visitor numbers by expanding Indigenous experiences
- New cultural tourism packages created
- Growth in culinary and brewery tourism offerings
- Progress on the development of food trails and guides
- Improvements in inter-neighborhood connectivity (e.g., new shuttle routes, bike lanes)
- Number of Downtown revitalization projects completed
- Progress on Convention Center optimization (e.g., increased bookings, revenue)
- Number of new partnerships formed for tourism development
- Number of successful legislative initiatives related to tourism
- Growth in participation in tourism and hospitality workforce development programs
- Number of new events created during shoulder seasons
- New programs and recommendations fulfilled (or status of)

Visit Albuquerque is adopting a new reporting approach that emphasizes the direct impact of its activities while positioning itself as the primary source for industry-level market data. This enhanced reporting strategy aims to offer more transparent insights to stakeholders, aligning with Visit Albuquerque's evolving role in the community as it implements the Destination Master Plan.

CONCLUSION

The journey of envisioning Albuquerque's future as a vibrant and captivating destination has been one of great dedication and collaboration. Visit Albuquerque and our esteemed partners have eagerly embraced the challenge of reflecting on our city's strengths and planning for the next decade. Blending thorough research, industry expertise, and valuable stakeholder input, has made the Destination Master Plan a reality—a comprehensive roadmap that will shape Albuquerque's future through impactful and attainable initiatives.

There was a conscious commitment to ensuring this plan is thoroughly implementable after completion. The broad-based engagement and buy-in, coupled with key milestones for each priority, creates a solid foundation for ongoing success.

To all those who participated, shared their insights, and remained engaged in this inspiring journey, we extend our heartfelt gratitude. Your invaluable contributions have been instrumental in developing a plan that will truly elevate Albuquerque as a place to live, work, play and visit. The impact of your input will be seen and felt throughout the city and beyond.

With its strategic priorities and detailed recommendations, Albuquerque Destination Master Plan outlines a strategic roadmap for enhancing the city's tourism sector over the next decade, addressing critical aspects of destination development, including Product Development, Events & Festivals, Downtown Development & Activation, Transportation & Connectivity, Workforce Development, Safety & Security, Venues and Facilities, Funding Options, and Organizational Positioning suggestions.

The success of this plan hinges on the collaborative spirit that has defined its development. As Albuquerque moves forward, continued engagement and adaptability will be crucial in realizing the vision set forth in this Destination Master Plan. Visit Albuquerque is committed to assuming a leading role within the tourism industry and supporting the implementation of these recommendations. This plan will not merely transform the destination in the short term; it will have a lasting impact that will resonate for years to come. This plan, in combination with an implementation milestone timeline provided to Visit Albuquerque, will be regularly updated to ensure Albuquerque adjusts to industry trends and best practices, remain relevant and increases in its competitive abilities for the prosperity of the community. Of course, the real strength of this plan will be in our collective action to achieve the goals set forth and maximize our opportunities.

As Visit Albuquerque moves forward with the implementation of this DMP, supported by our dedicated team, Board of Directors, and visionary partners, we are filled with a deep sense of appreciation for the collaborative spirit that has permeated the planning process. Together, we will help create an Albuquerque that exceeds expectations and embodies the very essence of an extraordinary destination.



APPENDIX

Steering Committee

We would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to the entire Visit ABQ team, the dedicated members of the DMP Steering Committee, as well as the stakeholders and partners across the community who actively participated in the 10-year Destination Master Plan for Albuquerque. Without their unwavering support and commitment, this plan would not have been possible. Thank you all for your contributions.

Michael Canfield	Indian Pueblo Cultural Center and Indian Pueblos Marketing
Deepesh Kholwadwala	Sun Capital Hotels
Ben Abruzzo	Sandia Peak Tramway
Mindy Jensen	Legacy Development & Management
Christine Pauley	American Society of Radiologic Technologists
Councilor Renee Grout	Albuquerque City Council
Dr. Samantha Sengel	City of Albuquerque
Tania Armenta	Visit Albuquerque
Councilor Joaquin Baca	Albuquerque City Council
Tom Garrity	The Garrity Group Public Relations
Steve Grant	Downtown Historic Corporate Housing
Cainan Harris	Heritage Hotels
Karl Holme	Greater Albuquerque Hotel & Lodging Association Representative
Damian Kirson	Rainbow Ryders Hot Air Balloon Co.
Damen Kompanowski	Sheraton Albuquerque Uptown
Ray Roa	Albuquerque Convention Center
William R. Stafford	Sadie's of New Mexico

Additionally thank you to the core Destination Master Plan team who helped facilitate and review the data from our internal team: Tania Armenta, Brooke Jung, Ceela McElveny, Rachel Cromer-Howard, Brenna Moore, Michelle Drenker, Marisol Lucero and Emily Howard from Cheetah Strategy.



Global Destinations' Readiness for Sustainable Tourism

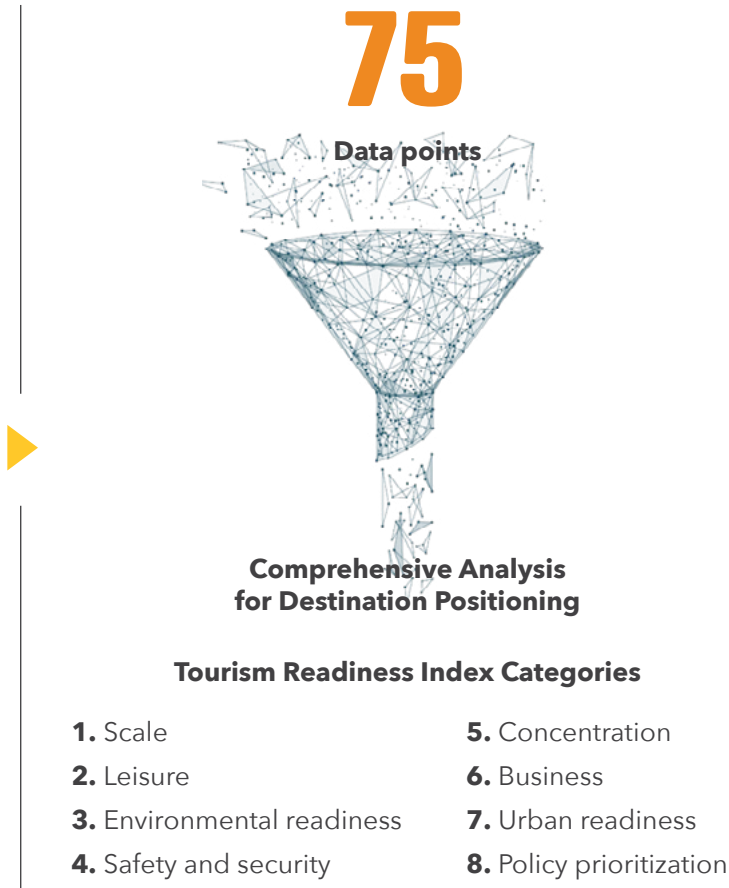
- Tourism Readiness Index is the product of a partnership between JLL and the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC) to assess global cities' tourism readiness.
- While readiness will depend on the ambitions and goals of every city, WTTC & JLL define tourism readiness as a strategic and all-inclusive approach that proactively addresses and implements factors and policies relating to scale, concentration, leisure and business offerings, environmental and urban readiness, safety & security as well as the prioritization of tourism.
- Indeed, no two destinations are better or the same and, as such, the challenges they will face, and the opportunities to unlock their tourism potential, will differ.
- However, commonalities can be identified to provide a framework through which cities can assess their context and plan for the future.

Tourism Readiness Index

- Comprehensive analysis addresses what makes a destination ready for sustainable Travel & Tourism.
- Assess current positioning and ability to manage growth
- Indicators | 75 data points across all facets of the tourism economy
- Outcomes | eight (8) categories and five (5) destination typologies



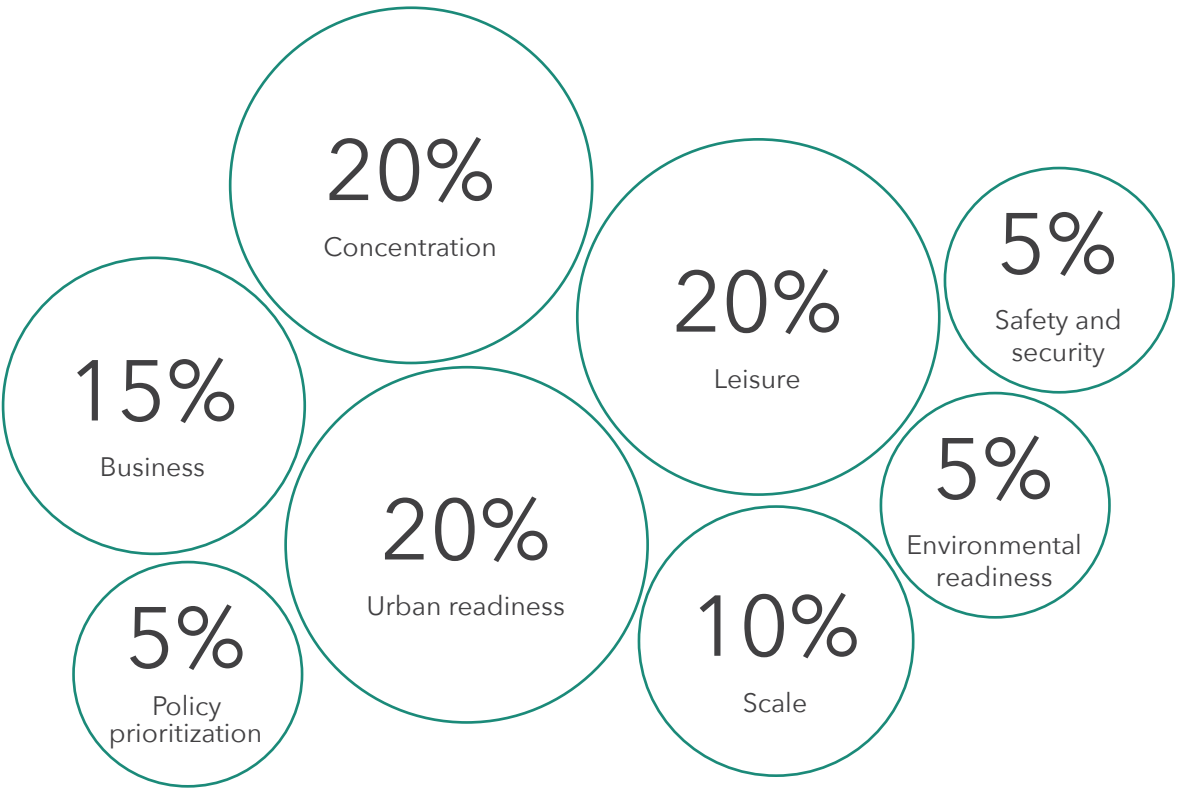
Globally recognized tool validated by over 100 domestic and international destinations + World Travel & Tourism Council



Levels of readiness | Destination typologies

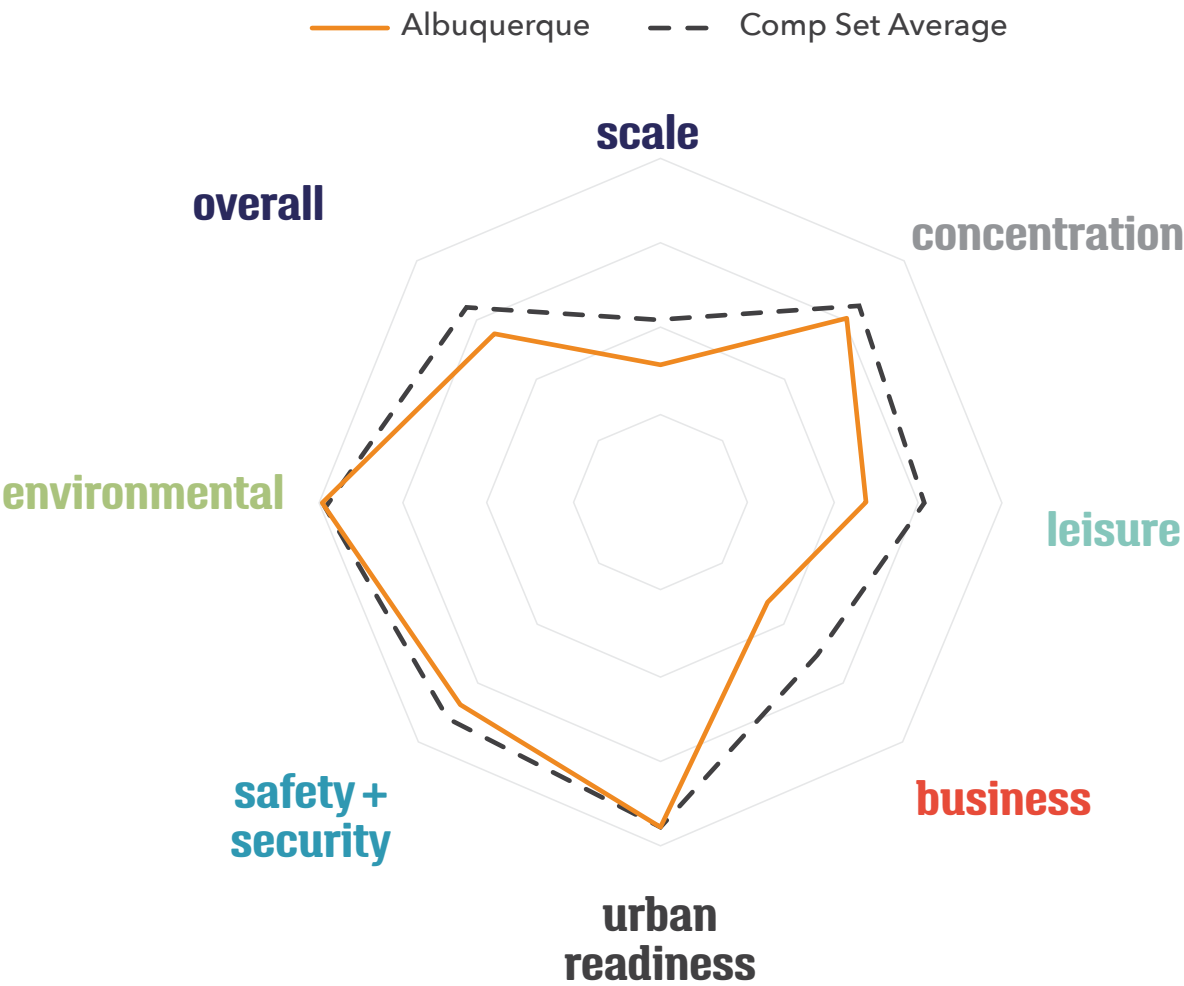
Dawning Developers	Emerging Performers	Balanced Dynamics	Mature Performers	Managing Momentum
Limited tourism infrastructure	Growing momentum	Established infrastructure	Strong leisure and/or business travel dynamics	Historically high growth momentum
Gradual tourism growth	Rising infrastructure	Growth in business and leisure paces with scale	Established tourism infrastructure	Aging or strained tourism infrastructure
Opportunities ahead with planning	Opportunities for strategic development	Equalized scale and concentration	Proactively manage pressures & capacity building	Feeling the pressures of scale & concentration
	Smaller scale - may experience pressures			

Weights by Category



Albuquerque as an Emerging Performer

Outcomes by Pillar



Demand Driver Scorecard

Process - Multi-step assessment of destination assets



Utilize visitor traffic and flow data to assess current demand



Place individual assets on scale based on eight criteria to score



Rate anything that is a 6-7 or greater as the Albuquerque's Attractors



Utilize the outcome to identify future competitive positioning



Recommend new investment or enhancement to grow assets on the scale

Score Card Elements

Item	Definition	Max Point Value
One of a Kind	Captivating content or collections that drives interest and appeal. Proximity of alternative similar offerings can be a factor in overall uniqueness	25
Iconic Scale	Dramatic visual prompting a curiosity powerful enough to inspire a visit (Instagram worthy- trying to capture a moment)	20
Engaging Visitor Experience	Interaction between the guest and the attraction	15
Current Visitor Demand	Level of visitor traffic, reviews, etc. to the asset currently	15
Event Opportunities	Programming temporal, catalytic events	10
Venue Capabilities	Easily transformed and adapted to host various functions	5
Identified Target Audience(s)	Multiple target audience and visitor types can be targeted based on overall connectivity	5
Future Unique Development	Upcoming additions or plan initiatives that elevate potential	5

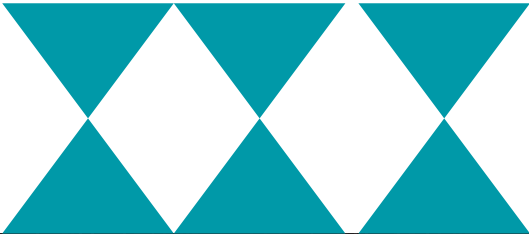
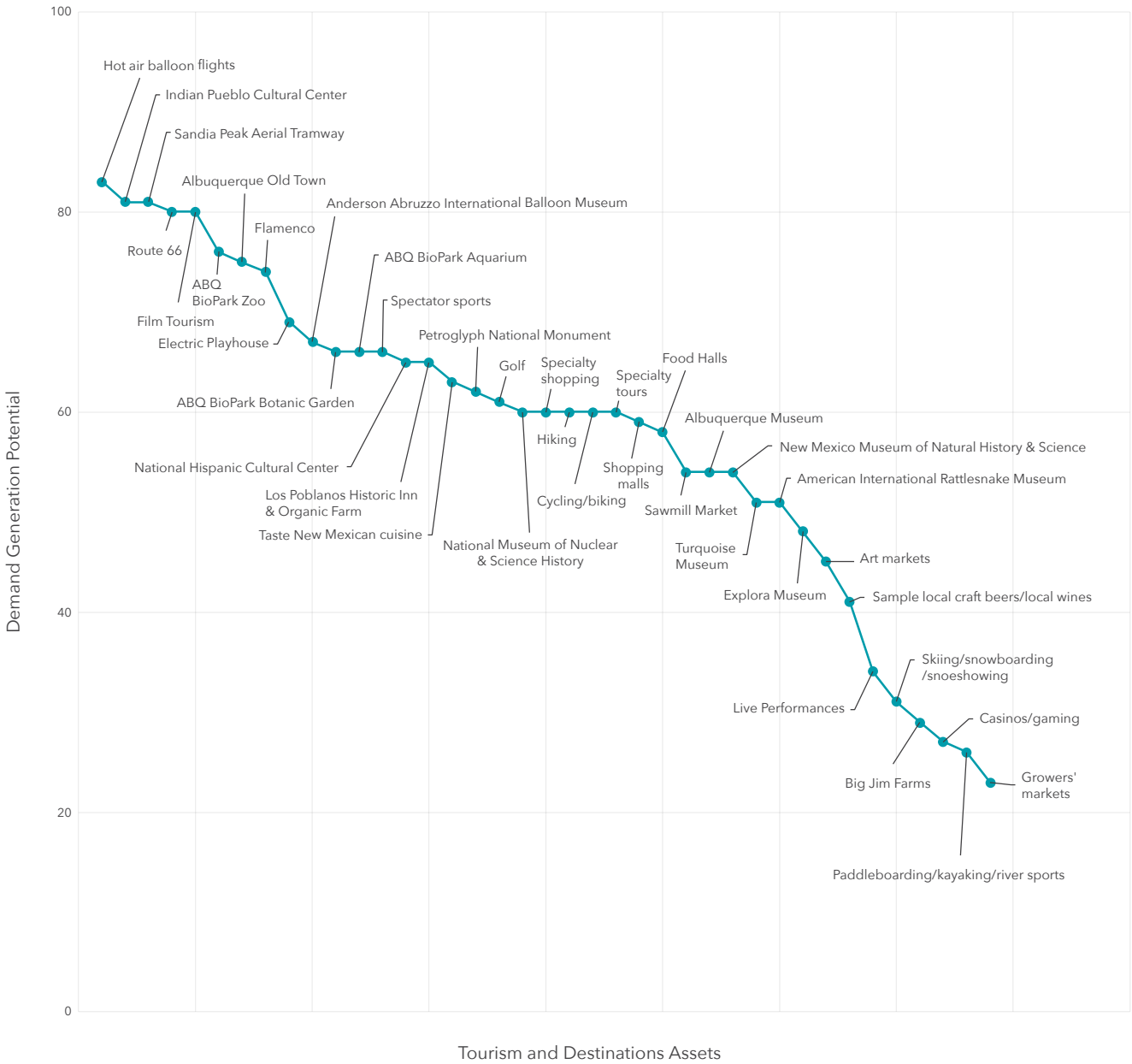
Score Card: Eiffel Tower Sample Scoring

Item	Definition	Score	Max Point Value
One of a Kind	Captivating content or collections that drives interest and appeal. Proximity of alternative similar offerings can be a factor in overall uniqueness	25	25
Iconic Scale	Dramatic visual prompting a curiosity powerful enough to inspire a visit (Instagram worthy- trying to capture a moment)	20	20
Engaging Visitor Experience	Interaction between the guest and the attraction	15	15
Current Visitor Demand	Level of visitor traffic, reviews, etc. to the asset currently	15	15
Event Opportunities	Programming temporal, catalytic events	10	10
Venue Capabilities	Easily transformed and adapted to host various functions	5	5
Identified Target Audience(s)	Multiple target audience and visitor types can be targeted based on overall connectivity	5	5
Future Unique Development	Upcoming additions or plan initiatives that elevate potential	5	5





Albuquerque Demand Driver Scorecard



Event Matrix

Purpose - Utilize criteria that cause events to drive return to understand the current landscape of events generating the desired outcome AND position Visit Albuquerque to support up and coming events to be successful.



Identify key events serviced by Visit Albuquerque



Rate events on matrix using 11 criteria



Identify those events that can grow in specific areas through matrix outcomes



Work with organizers on tactics for implementation

Program components

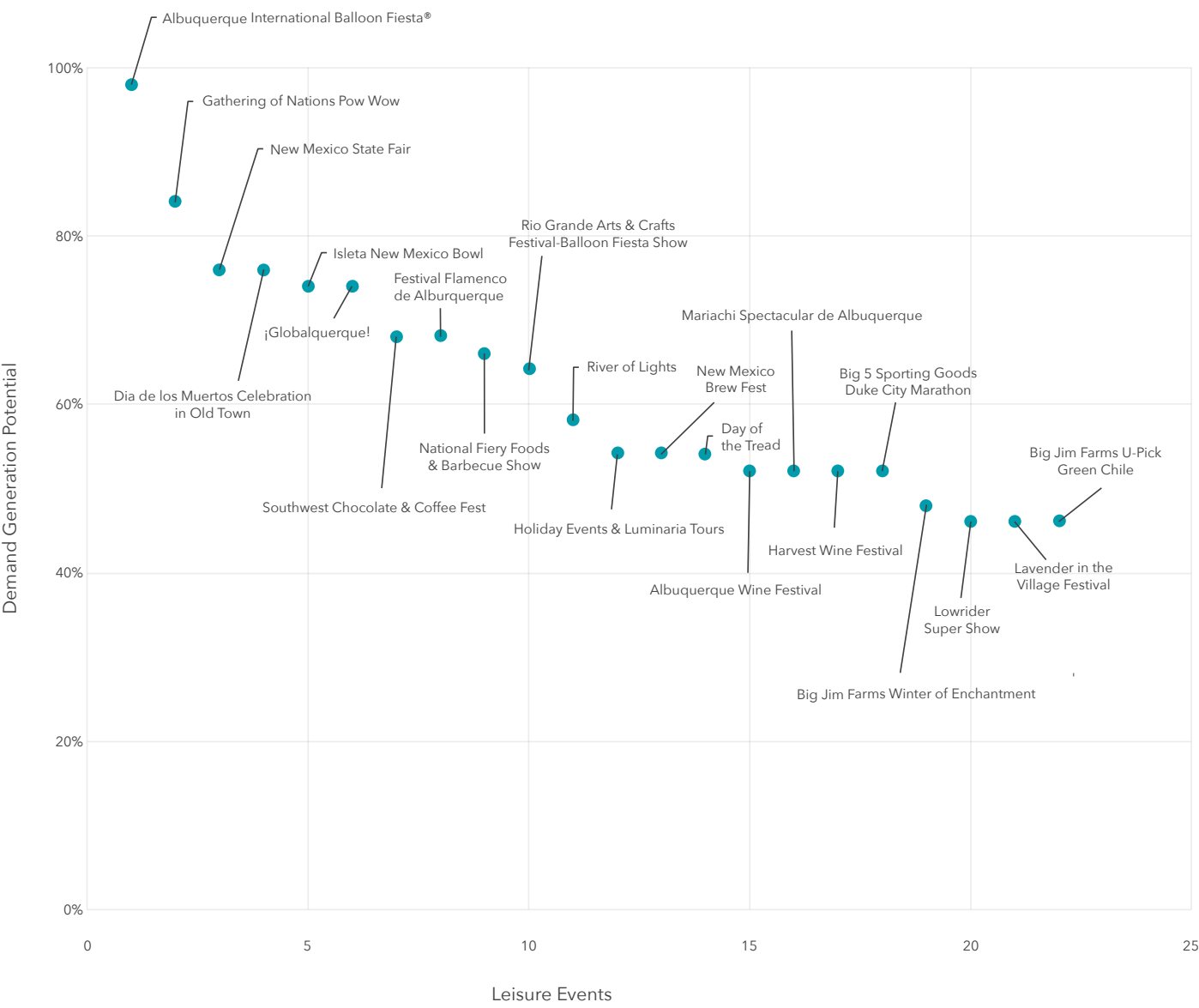
- Tourism Promotion – Destination Impact
 - Benefit to the Destination Brand
 - Innovation - uniqueness
 - Evidence of Partnerships
 - Organizational Structure & Management Capability
- Economic Impact (Direct Spending)
 - Suitable Target Market (s)
 - Comprehensive Marketing Plan/ Approach
 - Overnight Stays (Room nights)
 - Scale of Project – future potential
 - Time of Year – Need Periods



Program components

	Fail	Poor	Average	Above Average	Excellent	Total Points Awarded
Point Allocation Maximum = 5 points per component	1	2	3	4	5	55 MAX
Program Components						5
1. Tourism Promotion – Destination Impact						5
2. Benefit to the Destination Brand						5
3. Innovation - uniqueness						5
4. Evidence of Partnerships						5
5. Organizational Structure & Management Capability						5
6. Economic Impact (Direct Spending)						5
7. Suitable Target Market (s)						5
8. Comprehensive Marketing Plan/Approach						5
9. Overnight Stays (Room nights)						5
10. Scale of Project – future potential						5
11. Time of Year – Need Periods						5
Total Maximum possible points = 55						55

Albuquerque Event Matrix





. V I S I T .

ALBUQUERQUE[®]

CHANGE YOUR PERSPECTIVE



SEE A BRIGHTER WAY